

CHURCH-BASED ECONOMIC & SPIRITUAL  
DEVELOPMENT IN TODAY'S CITY

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## PREFACE

As a senior pastor of eighteen years, it baffles me why congregants think it is enough to simply go to church every Sunday, put a couple dollars in the offering tray, be inspired by the choir or worship leader, hear an inspiring sermon, then go home unchanged and unmotivated to carry out the Gospel mandate in their homes, neighborhoods and workplaces. I have prayed and asked the Lord, “where is the disconnect?” How can Christians remain unmotivated and unconcerned about the devastation in their surrounding communities: specifically the horrific inner city conditions? A majority of the households in the black community are run by single women who play dual roles - both mother and father. Drugs, gangs, and liquor stores harness more leverage and authority in the black community than churches. This is the case even in cities like Chicago where there may be three, four, sometimes even five churches on the same block in certain communities

The answer eluded me for some time but was finally revealed to me during a devotional time with the Lord as I was reading the Gospel of Matthew. In Matthew 9:35-38, we find Jesus simply being Jesus - preaching, healing and casting out demons. Verse thirty-six gave me the answer I was looking for: “When he saw the multitude, Jesus was moved with compassion because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then Jesus said to his disciples, *‘the harvest is truly plentiful, but the laborers are few.’*”

The answer hit me like a ton of bricks. Unless Christians' hearts are stirred with compassion by the Holy Spirit, they will not be moved or motivated to do anything to change the conditions of joblessness, homelessness, drugs, gangs, and the like. It is my prayer (as Jesus commanded in Matthew 9:38) that the Lord of the harvest will send laborers into his harvest to restore, renew, and recover everything the devil has destroyed in the black community.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express the deepest appreciation to my committee chair and mentor, Professor David Gill, who, in my estimation is a genius in the field of ethics and a camouflaged angel in expressions of his humanity. Without his guidance and persistent help, this dissertation would not have been possible. Thank you for being not only my academic mentor, but a true and lifelong brother and friend.

I would like to thank my committee member and reader, Professor Al Erisman, who deposited gems of wisdom and ethical instructions that will last for a life time. There will never be a dynamic duo team of professors that respected each other and were able to disagree without being disagreeable.

I would like to thank my church family, Calvary Covenant Church for allowing me to undertake this doctoral pursuit. You covered me through prayer, love and support which enabled me to make it to the finish line.

I would like to especially thank Meagan Turner for the level of expertise she provided in assisting me to think critically through this thesis. Finally, I would like to thank my two children, Earl Jr. and Nikita (Precious) for their persistent encouragement during difficult moments of discouragement. I would like to give special thanks to my loving wife, Kitty, for her love, patience and support she provided me throughout this entire doctoral process. Her continual pushing and affirming comments such as: “you can do it; I believe in you,” gave me the strength and confidence to see it to the finish line.

Most of all, I want to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for making it possible for me to fulfill this life-long endeavor.

## ABSTRACT

The state of affairs in the black community is gruesome; crime, violence and death have become the norm rather than rare occurrences. To make matters worse, unemployment, hopelessness and despair are the present realities in segments of the black community. As believers, we are called to be salt and light. To address these issues, we will form an organization that will serve as a job creation/community development mechanism that seeks to provide meaningful employment, affordable housing and tutoring/mentoring relationships that will restore economic and spiritual development in today's inner cities.



## CHAPTER 1

### CAN THESE DRY BONES LIVE?

One of the unique aspects of the city I live in is the ethnic diversity. Chicago is a melting pot similar to the United Nations. More precisely, Chicago is made up of many ethnic pockets that are not melted together, but instead are separated according to geographical boundaries. I live in the southern suburbs of Chicago. One day I chose to drive locally because I had business to attend to on the north side of Chicago and wanted to avoid the heavy expressway traffic. As I drove through the various communities, I made a striking observation. I was able to discern specifically which type of community I was driving through, not according to numerical addresses, but according to the ethnic scenery.

As I traveled through the Latino community, I was aware that it was the Latino community due to the signage on various businesses. Due to similar observations regarding signage on businesses and restaurants in the Chinese community, there was no mistaking that I was now in China Town. As I traveled through the Greek community, I was fully aware I was in "Greek Town." Nothing but Greek stores and restaurants were visible. As I traveled through the Korean community, I knew it was the Korean side of town due to the Korean restaurants and businesses. As I traveled through the Arab and Middle Eastern community, I again knew without a doubt the community I was traveling through.

As I traveled through business districts, there were bright lights, heavy customer traffic, and security. If there was a black community<sup>1</sup> sandwiched between other ethnic communities, I was able to perceive a difference; not according to geographical numerical address indicators, but through an observable scenic disparity. As I traveled through certain areas of the black community, it was as if I were traveling through a war zone or death trap. Litter filled the streets; abandoned buildings took up entire blocks; people were hanging out on street corners with no apparent destination. There was a dark, gloomy, and petrified feeling that overtook my emotions.

As I think about the black community, I am reminded of God asking the prophet Ezekiel a question concerning Israel in Ezekiel 37:3, "Can these dry bones live?" What appeared to be a hopeless situation in the days of Ezekiel, ended up becoming an opportunity for God to reveal his redemptive qualities in people willing to receive his wonderful gift of salvation. The same reality can be experienced in the black community. God is not discriminatory when it comes to salvations. I believe what God once did for Israel, He is willing to do for the black community today. God is too great and merciful to allow an entire race of people to be confronted with extinction and irrelevancy. Just as God commanded the prophet Ezekiel to prophesy to the dry bones of his day (Israel), he has commanded both past and modern day prophets to prophesy to the black community. Just as God breathed life into Israel which had become dry,

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<sup>1</sup> Black Community and African-American community will be used interchanably in this thesis. The more acceptable reference to black people today is African-American. "Blacks" makes reference to skin color; "African American" makes reference to ancestral heritage along with United States citizenship.

brittle, and dead, He can breathe hope and life into a people that appears to be dead, lifeless, and irrelevant today.

In this thesis, I will develop a vision and plan that I hope God would use to resuscitate the black community from an apparent code blue status to a relevant, lively, and productive existence.

### **From Washington and Du Bois to King**

The relevancy and flourishing of the black community has been a continued concern for many African American leaders in past history. Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) and W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963) were two great leaders of the black community who proposed and debated opposing philosophies and strategies for the social and economic development of the black community. Their disagreements are echoed in much of today's discussions over how to end class and racial injustice, the role of black leadership, and what the "haves" owe the "have-nots" in the black community.

Booker T. Washington, the most influential black leader of his time as an educator and reformer, preached a philosophy of self-help, racial solidarity, and accommodation. He urged blacks to tolerate some discrimination for the time being and concentrate on elevating themselves through hard work and material improvement. He believed in basic education in the crafts, industrial and farming skills, and the cultivation of virtues such as patience, enterprise, and thrift. He taught that this would

win the respect of whites and would eventually lead to full acceptance of African-Americans as citizens, integrated into every strata of society.<sup>2</sup>

W.E.B. DuBois, a towering black intellectual, scholar, and political thinker, argued that Washington's gradualist strategy would serve only to perpetuate white oppression. DuBois, who helped found the NAACP, advocated political action in addition to a civil rights agenda, and argued that social change could be accomplished only by developing college-educated black leadership by what he called 'the Talented Tenth.' He described 'the Talented Tenth' as follows: "The Negro Race is going to be saved by its exceptional men. The problem of education then, among Negroes, must first of all deal with the 'Talented Tenth.'" It is the problem of developing the best of this race that they may guide the mass away from the contamination and death of the worst."<sup>3</sup>

At the time, the Washington v. DuBois dispute polarized African American leaders into two wings: the 'conservative' supporters of Washington, and the more 'radical' supporters of DuBois. While Washington focused primarily on basic education that would not upset the status quo, DuBois focused on a more aggressive political strategy and on higher education for blacks to maintain ethnic pride and affirm racial equality. DuBois was going for the 'whole ball of wax' - basic economic security was not enough. Full equality and respect were the goal. The DuBois philosophy of agitation

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<sup>2</sup> W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington, *WGBH Educational Foundation*, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/race/etc/road.html>.

<sup>3</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, "The Talented Tenth: From The Negro Problem" A Series of Articles by Representative Negroes of Today, (New York, NY: 1903).

and assertion of civil rights flowed directly into the Civil Rights movement that began to develop in the 1950's, and exploded into the 1960's.

A third brilliant leader who took on the challenge of the black community's social, economic, and even spiritual development was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–1968). Of course, King was not just an activist for the black community; he was an advocate for the oppressed and marginalized victims of an unjust system whose biased laws kept part of society at a perpetual disadvantage. King was certainly influenced by Mohandas Gandhi's non-violent protests in India. He was also influenced by the Emancipation Proclamation, the Declaration of Independence, and additional great political documents. Thoughts and words from each of these were reflected in his famous "I Have A Dream" speech on August 28, 1963, to more than 250,000 civil rights supporters from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial during the March on Washington D.C.

As a Baptist minister, King's natural base was the church. Consequently, the ultimate foundation of his philosophy and strategy was biblical faith. In what was to become his equally famous, April 16, 1963 "Letter from Birmingham Jail" addressed to fellow clergy both white and black, one begins to see the explicit biblical roots of King's thinking. Such biblical thinking was expressed in his response to why he, being considered an "out-sider," was involved in the affairs of Birmingham. King felt compelled to go to Birmingham for the same reason the prophets of the Old Testament, and the Apostle Paul of the New Testament, left their home town and base of operation to confront injustice and oppression of disadvantaged people in other countries.

What then was King's programmatic philosophy? Non-violent protest, forgiveness, civil disobedience in the form of marches, work stoppages, and bus sit-ins, at lunch counters, and attempts to register to vote and enroll in segregated schools became some of the movement's primary tactics. King and his supporters prayed, sang, and spoke out against the violence, prejudice, and discrimination that neither Washington nor DuBois had been able to overcome.

In a recent attempt to summarize King's agenda, Ned Resnikoff, an MSN reporter, distinctly identified "Four Ways Martin Luther King Jr. wanted to Battle Inequality":<sup>4</sup> He wanted to, ratify an economic bill of rights; guarantee everyone basic income with no strings attached; build a powerful labor movement; and guarantee a job to anyone who can work. Let us take some time to examine and review what these four steps look like in practice.

In 1968, the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) led by Dr. King, drafted a letter demanding "an economic and social bill of rights" that promised all citizens the right to a job, an adequate education, and a decent house. "It cannot take more than two centuries for it to occur to this country that there is no real right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for people condemned by the accident of their birth to an existence of hereditary economic and social misery."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ned Resnikoff, "Four Ways Martin Luther King Jr. Wanted to Battle Inequality," accessed November 28, 2014, <http://www.msnbc.com/all/mlks-fight-against-economic-inequality>.

<sup>5</sup> Southern Christian Leadership Conference, "Economic and Social Bill of Rights," *The King Center*, February 6, 1968, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/economic-and-social-bill-rights>.

While the SCLC was specifically concerned with ways in which economic inequality perpetuates racial inequality, they made clear that the rights they proposed applied to all citizens. While it sounded radical at the time, it is notable that their efforts echoed a similar proposal made by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt during his 1944 State of the Union Address. In this address, he called for a “second bill of rights” to guarantee all citizens a “useful and remunerative job” and adequate medical care.<sup>6</sup>

Dr. King also believed that every person was entitled to a livable income (or living wage) whether he or she worked or not. In his 1968 book *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* King called for unconditional cash transfers to every American citizen. These cash transfers would not be just enough to scrape by on. Instead of subsistence, King thought that a guaranteed income “must be pegged to the median income of society, not at the lowest levels of income.”<sup>7</sup> While this guaranteed income sounds radical in our era of capitalist excess and entitlement, it is important to remember that President Richard Nixon had a basic income proposal called the Family Assistance Plan, which he unveiled to the nation in 1969. Nixon’s plan failed in part because some on the Left thought his offer of \$1,600 per year for each family of four

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<sup>6</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, “State of the Union Message to Congress,” *Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum*, January 11, 1944, accessed November 28, 2104, [http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/archives/address\\_text.html](http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/archives/address_text.html).

<sup>7</sup> Martin Luther King Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1967), 173.

was not ambitious enough.<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, even capitalist icon, University of Chicago economist Milton Friedman, had proposed something similar with his “negative income tax” - this was not just some socialist dream!<sup>9</sup>

The third part of the SCLC program was to support labor and labor unions. King spent much of his career working with labor. At the time of his assassination, he was campaigning in Memphis, Tennessee on behalf of the city’s sanitation workers on strike. He delivered his final “I’ve been to the mountaintop” speech to a crowd of predominantly black sanitation workers and supporters of their right to form a union.<sup>10</sup> The 1968 Memphis strike was not the first time King reached out directly to the labor segment of the human rights movement. He had been delivering speeches to crowds of union members for years, calling for greater cooperation between the civil rights movement and the labor movement. “The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress,” he told the Illinois State AFL-CIO in 1965.

Out of its bold struggles, economic and social reform gave birth to unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, government relief for the destitute, and, above all, new wage levels that meant not mere survival but a tolerable life.<sup>11</sup> The labor movement, if it is to remain vital, needs to raise the standard of living of all workers, not merely those under its contracts...As the relative number of workers in unions drop, the strength of labor will fail if it does not

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Nixon, “Address to the Nation on Domestic Programs,” *The American Presidency Project*, August 8, 1969, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=2191>.

<sup>9</sup> Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, 40<sup>th</sup> ed (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 2002), 192–194.

<sup>10</sup> Martin Luther King Jr., “I’ve Been to the Mountain Top,” *The King Center*, April 3, 1968, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://www.the.kingcenter.org/archive/document/ive-been-mountaintop>.

<sup>11</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., and Michael K. Honey, “Illinois State AFL-CIO,” *All Labor Has Dignity* (Boston, MA: Beacon, 2011), 112–20.



become a social force pressing for greater dimensions of wealth for all those who labor.<sup>12</sup>

The fourth goal expressed by the SCLC was “the right of every employable citizen to a decent job.” Those who were willing and able to work should be guaranteed a job. King wrote shortly before his death, “I hope that a specific number of jobs is set forth, that a program will emerge to abolish unemployment, and that there will be another program to supplement the income of those whose earnings are below the poverty level.”<sup>13</sup> After King’s death, several academics followed up on his plea to guarantee a job to anyone who can work. Most notably, economists at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and Bard College, as well as Duke University public policy professor William Darity Jr., argued in favor of a government program that would create public sector jobs for anyone not already employed.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to Washington, DuBois, and King, there have been hundreds, if not thousands, of freedom fighters, civil rights leaders, and political activists who have spoken out and who have sacrificially worked to overcome poverty, violence, injustice, inequality, and discrimination in the black community. Think of Rosa Parks, Medgar Evers, Julian Bond, Whitney Young, Dorothy Cotton, and Nelson Mandela. Think also of the huge strides forward illustrated by black political leaders, judges, business leaders,

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<sup>12</sup> King and Honey, *All Labor Has Dignity*, 112-20.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Luther King Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1967), 174.

<sup>14</sup> Alan Aja, Daniel Bustillo, William Darity, Jr., and Darrick Hamilton, “Jobs Instead of Austerity: A Bold Policy for Economic Justice,” *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 80, no 3, (Fall 2013): 781-794.

entertainers, and sports heroes. President Barack Obama is the most prominent example of this huge stride forward.

Washington, DuBois, King, and others known and unknown, did not labor, witness, and die in vain. Yet the battle is far from over. That black community in Chicago I described driving through, still stands in need, not just of prayer, but of economic and spiritual reform and renewal. King may have “seen the promised land” and more American minorities may actually be living “over there” these days; we may have even come “thus far by faith,” but we “still have a long way to go.”

### **Drugs, Alcohol, and Religion**

If we turn our attention away from media success stories, we find that there are three types of businesses that flourish in the black community: drugs, liquor stores, and churches. No one of these three business types is the sole solution to an already deteriorating community.

Satan has proposed an effective “shortcut” plan for success in the black community – drugs. In reality however, the drug culture breeds poverty, crime, and death. Satan’s plan implies that, “you don’t have to go to school or work hard to get ahead; you can make just as much, if not more, than top executives sitting behind an executive desk.” It appears that many young black men in particular, have taken the Devil up on this offer, despite the consequences. There must be an alternative or solution to this epidemic that is literally sending an entire race of people toward extinction.

Economic resources alone cannot eradicate the drug problem in the black community. Huge amounts of economic resources, 18.8 billion dollars from the federal government in fiscal year 2002 alone, including numerous personnel and massive prison construction projects, have been hurled at the problem. Even with such vast resources used to combat this epidemic, the drug war has failed to eliminate illegal drug use.<sup>15</sup>

A perpetual flow of illegal drugs in the black community has had significant generational consequences. Young kids, pre-teens, are strategically targeted to aid and assist in selling, delivering, and distributing drugs on elementary school grounds. Drug dealers know the penalties for minors are less severe than for adults. Therefore, younger blacks are recruited, harassed, and intimidated to participate in the drug culture that is so pervasive among the black community. Because of this situation, public school students are now required to take drug tests in an increasing number of schools, even when drugs have not been proven to be a serious problem in the school. Detection dogs are frequently used and school parking lots searched to uncover illegal drugs without search warrants.<sup>16</sup>

One of the unanticipated consequences of the war on drugs has been the social and legal disenfranchisement of the segment of society involved in the supply of drugs, as opposed to those involved in drug possession or use). Although most Americans will not be duly disturbed by the prospect of convicted felons being unable to vote, the

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<sup>15</sup> Eric L. Jensen, Jurg Gerber, and Clayton Mosher, "Social Consequences of the War on Drugs: The Legacy of Failed Policy," *Criminal Justice Policy Review* 15, no 1, (March 2004): 100-121.

<sup>16</sup> Jensen, Gerber, and Mosher, "Social Consequences," 100-121.

disproportionate impact of felony disenfranchisement of African Americans should be cause for concern.<sup>17</sup> Incarceration concretely denies citizenship rights through felon disenfranchisement laws. In most states, a felony conviction results in the loss of the right to vote either temporarily during incarceration or permanently. Forty-eight states and the District of Columbia bar inmates from voting while they are incarcerated for a felony. Thirty-two states disenfranchise felons while they are in prison as well as when they are on probation or parole.<sup>18</sup> Disenfranchisement from the political process has enormous ramifications; if a person is unable to participate in the political process, his or her voice has been silenced so that policy-makers do not have to invoke change in the lives of hurting people. Perhaps felons and ex-felons could have determined different outcomes of mayoral, gubernatorial, senatorial, and even presidential races.

There are also systemic issues with the enforcing of laws in the fight against the “War on Drugs” in the black community. The targeting of the Black community by law enforcement agencies has produced enormously harmful, but entirely predictable, results. As a consequence of the War on Drugs, large numbers of African American males have been virtually erased from African American communities and incarcerated in prisons and jails. This mass incarceration of African American males has created many endemic problems within African American communities. These problems include, the loss of male role models and fathers for African American youths; the loss of

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<sup>17</sup> Jensen, Gerber, and Mosher, “Social Consequences,” 100-121.

<sup>18</sup> Dorothy E. Roberts, “The Social and Moral Costs of Mass Incarceration in African American Communities,” *Stanford Law Review* 56, no. 5, (2004): 1271-1305.

husbands and male companions for African American women; the loss of earnings and wealth for the African American community; the loss of memberships of important African American organizations and institutions; the preclusion of the educational and social development of the incarcerated; and the encouragement of the spread of AIDS.<sup>19</sup>

Roland Martin, former CNN correspondent, recently described the drug menace as follows:

Launched in the early 1970's, the war on drugs is the nation's longest, most expensive battle – 40 years and hundreds of billions of dollars spent and millions of lives destroyed. It continues, even though most experts say it can't, and will never, be won. And though whites are more likely to use or sell narcotics, African-Americans, and black men in particular, have become the war's primary casualties.

Federal government stats show African-Americans make up 14 percent of regular drug users, but are about 37 percent of those arrested for drug crimes. From 1980 to 2007 – the height of the crackdown – 25.4 million adults were charged with possession or use of illegal narcotics; 8.5 million of those were African-Americans, nearly three times the percentage of blacks in general population. Of the nearly one million African-Americans behind bars, about two thirds are there for nonviolent drug offenses, even though whites are more likely than blacks to use illegal drugs.

President Obama and drug czar Gil Kerlikowske have made tentative steps away from the drug war. In 2010, President Obama signed a law reducing disproportionately tough sentences for crack cocaine, but that went from 100 to 1 to 18 to 1, and Kerlikowske has pushed treatment for drug offenders instead of incarceration. Yet, the number of black men behind bars continues to spiral as the war grinds on, keeping men out of college, out of the workforce and out of the homes. Over the last twenty years, studies show about one out of every ten black children has had a father in a prison cell.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Kenneth B. Nunn, "Race, Crime, and the Pool of Surplus Criminality: Why the 'War on Drugs' Was a 'War on Blacks,'" *Gender Race, & Justice* 381, accessed April 16, 2015, <http://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/jgrj6&div=19&id=&page=>.

<sup>20</sup> Roland Martin, "The Impact of America's War on Drugs on African-American Men and the Black Community," accessed May 13, 2013, <http://rolandmartinreports.com/blog/2013/05/the-impact-of-americas-war-on-drugs-on-african-american-men-and-the-black-community-video/>.

Martin's report provides a panoramic context of the drug culture and its devastating impact on the black community in general, and on black men in particular, from the 70's to the present. The significant points to consider in this report are the billions of dollars spent and political leaders' attempts to crack down on the distribution and impact of drugs in the black community. Martin's report goes on to reveal tremendous attempts to rehabilitate and reform drug dealers and users, yet drugs still ravage the black community, resulting in poverty, crime, and death. This is why there must not be an emphasis solely on the economic revitalization of the black community; there must be a spiritual one as well.

The second prominent type of business in black communities is the liquor store. Liquor stores have replaced many meaningful businesses and jobs that once existed in black neighborhoods. Liquor stores are not much more than legalized drug dispensaries, and addiction to alcohol produces equally devastating results as the side effects created by an euphoria for cocaine or marijuana.

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, there is an ethnicity and health disparity in alcohol research. The statistics on drinking status and heavy drinking for U.S. Ethnic Groups by Gender, 2001-2002 reveal that 62.62% of black males and 45.92% of black females suffer from alcohol overuse. Weekly heavy drinking among black males is 19.88 percent and 12.67 percent among black females. The daily heavy drinking statistics reveal 25.81% among black males and 19.02% among black females.<sup>21</sup> Large national surveys also provide limited data for examining explanatory factors for alcohol disparities much beyond social demographic variables, often limiting this research to smaller less representative samples. Both drinking and the development of alcohol-related problems are complex events with multiple causes. U.S. ethnic minorities, therefore, have to contend with a host of factors with the potential

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<sup>21</sup> Karen Chartier and Raul Caetano, "Ethnicity and Health Disparities in Alcohol Research," *Alcohol Research & Health* 33 no.1-2 (2010): 152, accessed November 28, 2015, <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/arh40/152-160.htm>.

to have adverse effects on these behaviors. Immigrant groups must go through a process of acculturation to U.S. society that can lead to increased personal stress and tension within families. Together with Blacks and Native Americans, these groups also can face socioeconomic disadvantage and potential racial/ethnic discrimination. These two latter factors in turn often are associated with, for example, poor job opportunities, residential segregation, life in unsafe neighborhoods, overexposure to alcohol advertising, police profiling and brutality, and lack of access to adequate health care. To face the challenges associated with reducing and ultimately eliminating health disparities in the alcohol field, research must maintain a systematic, strong, and growing focus on ethnic minorities.<sup>22</sup>

These statistics are staggering and reveal that many people in the black community attempt to medicate the pain and loss of unemployment and hopelessness, using alcohol as an anesthetic which provides a temporary escape from painful realities. Liquor stores are breeding grounds for alcoholics and aimless wanderers in the black community and serve as a magnet for loiterers and criminals, awaiting opportunistic crimes against vulnerable passersby.

People such as Karen Bass of South L.A., and Rev. James Meeks of Chicago, are two individuals who have made a difference in the liquor store culture of their respective communities. Bass helped to form the South L.A. Community Coalition, which has led a campaign to target liquor stores that detracted from the community's well being and created a public nuisance. Bass, a physician assistant and community activist, got tired of sewing up bullet wounds and decided something had to be done. Bass and her newly formed coalition, surveyed nearly 30,000 residents from the community and the overwhelming response from the residents was to shut down liquor

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<sup>22</sup> Karen Chartier and Raul Caetano, *Ethnicity and Health Disparities in Alcohol Research*, 2001-2002, accessed November 28, 2015, <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/arh40/152-160.htm>.

stores in their community. The coalition received their marching orders from the community and went into action. Prior to the coalition's efforts, the area had over 700 liquor stores. As a result of the coalition's involvement through the court system and protests, they successfully closed nearly 200 operating liquor stores in South Los Angeles. After closing the liquor stores there was a 27% reduction in violent crimes, felonies, drug-related felonies or misdemeanors, and prostitution within a four-block radius of each liquor store.<sup>23</sup>

Rev. James T. Meeks, a Baptist minister in Chicago and former Illinois state senator, mobilized his 15,000 member, mega-church to dry up the Roseland area where his church is located. Meeks spear-headed his "dry up Roseland" campaign in 1998. In spite of multiple threats on his life, he was eventually able to close 26 liquor stores. Just as in the case of the South Los Angeles Coalition, the Roseland area experienced a reduction in crime, felonies, and prostitution. A recent Northwestern medicine study examined the association between proximity to a liquor store and gun-shot wounds from 1999 to 2009. This study found that a person near a liquor store or tavern on the south or west side of Chicago is up to 500 times more likely to be shot than an individual on the other side of the same neighborhood.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Karen Bass and South L.A Community Coalition, "Closing of Liquor Stores Reduces Crime and Violence," *Designing Healthy Communities*, Oct. 7, 2010, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://www.designinghealthycommunities.org/closing-liquor-stores-reduce-crime>.

<sup>24</sup> Marla Paul, "Being Near a Liquor Store or Tavern in Chicago Hikes Odds of Gunshot Wound, Home, Health," Sept. 20, 2013, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://www.Medicalxpress.com/news/2013-09-liquor-tavern-chicago-hike>.



Churches are the third big type of business that flourishes within the black community. The church should have the same goals as God himself. In the New Testament, we see the church called to become the very “Body of Christ,” but if Churches are led by sinful, self-centered “pastors,” and if going to church is an experience not much more than a temporary “high,” then the church is no better than the drug or liquor store culture.

Many neighborhoods in the black community have three, four, even five churches on one block. The striking thing is that with all the potential ‘fire power’ from heaven, few people are getting saved. In fact, many I have talked to, claim they don’t even know who Jesus is. There are all kinds of churches in the black community: old denominations, new church plants, small storefronts, male and female pastors, and other variations thereof.

The undercurrent of frustration from many in the black community is that there are several mega-churches of three thousand or more parishioners and millions of dollars of income taken in annually. These are resources that could help resolve many of the issues previously described in the black community, such as crime, unemployment, incarceration, and illiteracy, but instead are adding to the problem rather than providing solutions. The psyche of people in the black community is harmed when they observe pastors driving around in expensive cars, flying in personal jets, and walking around in tailored custom made suits. They witness pastors living these ‘flashy’ lifestyles while at the same time many in the black community do not know how their

rent will be paid at the end of the month. To this particular point, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said in his book, *Strength to Love*,

Gradually, however, the church became so entrenched in wealth and prestige that it began to dilute the strong demands of the Gospel and to conform to the ways of the world. And ever since the church has been a weak and ineffectual trumpet making uncertain sounds. If the church of Jesus Christ is to regain once more its power, message, and authentic ring, it must conform only to the demands of the Gospel.<sup>25</sup>

To add to the skepticism, many of these pastors are uneducated, untrained, and unaccountable to anyone. They rely on larger than life egos rather than a denomination, elder board, or any other form of spiritual or theological accountability.

Jesus said, "We are the salt of the earth and the light of the world." Salt serves as a preservative and light exposes all that is in the dark. A key question that should be asked is, if we are the salt of the earth and salt is a preservative, why is there such deterioration in the black community? Why do drug dealers and liquor stores dominate and control entire neighborhoods in the black community when there are multiple churches on a single block?

Rick Warren, author of "The Purpose Driven Church" writes, "Unless the driving force behind a church is biblical, the health and growth of the church will never be what God intended. Strong churches are not built on programs, personalities, or gimmicks. They are built on the eternal purposes of God."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Martin Luther King Jr., *Strength to Love* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1981), 25-26.

<sup>26</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message & Mission*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 83.

In her article, “Black Churches: Are they addressing our Concerns,” Bene Viera writes:

With the dire ills plaguing the black community – mass incarceration, institutionalized racism, HIV/AIDS infection rates, unemployment, health disparities, failing education systems – it’s hard not to wonder if the Black Church has abandoned the Social Gospel that was once the backbone of the Civil Rights Movement. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the Social Gospel was popular throughout the Protestant Christian Churches where social issues were addressed with Christian principles. Due to the lack of resources and institutions blacks had in the fifties and sixties, the black church, in many ways, served as a hub.<sup>27</sup>

What is needed of churches in the black community is a ‘kingdom’ perspective.

If our churches and churchgoers were to see themselves as a crucial and vital part of God’s work in the universe today, it would change much of what we do, and do not do. It would give us confidence and direction. We need a kingdom focus to meet the challenges of a fast-changing world. We need a kingdom focus to understand our world and its movements. Without a kingdom focus we flounder between programs, disappointments, and fads while our churches are suffering and people are overcome with sin and spiritual struggles.<sup>28</sup> Even though it may start small, a ‘kingdom’ oriented program looks to restore and reflect God’s claims of universal authority, and extends that claim to every creature of God and will show that scope at the coming consummation. The kingdom is bigger than a church. It has real claims on the world.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Bene Viera, “Black Churches: Are They Addressing Our Concerns,” *Clearsky Interactive*, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://www.loop21.com>. The link to this article is no longer available.

<sup>28</sup> Gene Mims, *The Kingdom Focused Church: A Compelling Image of an Achievable Future* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 2003), ix.

<sup>29</sup> Rebekah A. Eklund, and John E. Phelan Jr., eds., *Doing Theology for the Church: Essays in Honor of Klyne Snodgrass* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2014), 37.

When churches in the black community are willing to adopt a kingdom perspective and pastors allow Jesus Christ to be king over that 'kingdom' community, the church will experience liberation and freedom as described in Luke 4:18-19, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

### **Factors Contributing to the Downward Spiral in the Black Workplace**

Much of the downward spiral and disintegration of the black community is due to high rates of unemployment and a lack of healthy workplaces and marketplaces for people within those communities. Jobs at the liquor store and the church are not the answer. Not only are many African Americans unemployed, but many of those unemployed are unemployable in their current state. Part of the problem is that without jobs there is no money. Jacques Ellul states in his book, *Money and Power*,

Without money, people are only paupers. They stand outside society and have hardly any place or function. We can almost say with Marx that in our world people exist only because of what they have, and when they have nothing, they do not exist. This is true in all societies, not only in capitalism, but the superiority given to material things in capitalism or socialism (it all comes to the same thing) makes this phenomenon more obvious and more severe in our time.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Jacques Ellul, *Money and Power* (Madison, WI: IVP, 1984), 141.

Of course it is not just a lack of money. Without adequate work people lose self-respect and consequently, much of their identity. Work is intended to bring dignity, to provide an opportunity for creativity, and to bring us into relationship with the earth and other people. One would think that there is always more work to be done in our communities yet so many are without decent jobs. How and why has this happened?

Michael B. Katz and Mark J. Stern's study, *One Nation Divisible*, explores the abiding economic paradox of American life. This paradox is that while some individuals are able to climb the ladder of financial success, inequities of race and gender in relation to the distribution of income and wealth remain pervasive throughout society.<sup>31</sup> Travis Waldron writes, "Blacks are more likely than whites to work in the public sector, meaning the loss of more than 600,000 government jobs at the federal, state, and local levels has disproportionately impacted them. The public sector shed another 13,000 jobs in October of 2012."<sup>32</sup>

The larger story though, is that high black unemployment rates are a structural problem that has resulted from centuries of relative inaccessibility to higher education and higher-paying jobs. Sixty years after the Supreme Court officially desegregated American schools, they remain largely segregated along racial and economic lines. Students from low-income, low-educated backgrounds are more likely to be black, and

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<sup>31</sup> Michael B. Katz and Mark J. Stern, *One Nation Divisible: What America Was and What It Is Becoming* (New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008.)

<sup>32</sup> Travis Waldron, "The African American Unemployment Crisis Continues," *ThinkProgress*, November 3, 2012, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2012/11/03/1129721/african-american-unemployment-crisis/>.

less likely to go to college. Even high-achieving students at low-income high schools are less likely to attend college than similar students at high-income high schools. Black students are also more likely to fall on the wrong side of the growing education gap between the rich and the poor.

This has created a cycle of rising income inequality that was exacerbated by the recession when the wealth gap between black and white families doubled. During this time, blacks were twice as likely to have been hit by the housing crisis as whites, thanks in part to discriminatory lending policies and practices. Declining unionization rates are more likely to hurt black workers, and cuts to all sorts of social programs, from public transportation to the safety net, have made it harder for black workers to participate fully in the economy. This is nothing short of a crisis. Unlike the unemployment crisis that has afflicted the United States since the great Recession began, it is not one that will be addressed simply by fostering economic growth. There are seven factors that contribute to and underlie this current economic situation.

The first culprit is the high drop-out rate from schools. According to the Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey,<sup>33</sup> a staggering forty percent of all African American high school students in Chicago drop out and never graduate. That percentage does not take into account students that are just “passed on” to inflate the statistical “success” of some schools. Students that are “passed on” to the high school level or who are given high school diplomas and decent grade point averages without

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<sup>33</sup> “Unemployed Persons by Marital Status, Race, Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, Age, and Sex, Labor Force,” *Population Survey*, (2011-2012), accessed November 28, 2014, <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat24.htm>.

truly earning them, are left unprepared at the college level. This unfair and unfortunate practice does nothing more than breed illiteracy within the black community. As previously mentioned, it is much easier and less complicated for an African American to simply drop out of school and sell drugs than to struggle through the tyranny of mastering calculus, biology, or computer science. It is almost certain that those who drop out of school will experience poverty. Those with no education are almost assured a life below the poverty standard, unless they engage in illegal activity.

The second culprit is dysfunctional families. There are too many instances of babies having babies in the black community. Many families are not planned but come about as a result of self-gratification of the flesh in the moment. While there are widely available contraceptives for free, many men and women do not bother with preventative measures and irresponsibly engage in behavior that will keep them gripped in the sphere of poverty. Not only will these irresponsible new parents remain unemployed and in poverty, but they ensure that succeeding generations will be impoverished as well. Once a person enters this vicious generational cycle, it becomes a normal way of life. Within many family systems in the black community there is no fear of God imparted to the children. They do what is right in their own eyes, and what is right in their own eyes is dictated by what they hear and see. The entertainment industry molds many young black minds. Negativity and disrespect for one another is what they pick up on when they listen to radio stations and view adult television. What many children have adapted to and learned is how to function within dysfunction. What used to be abnormal has become normal. The underlying causes that have led to the

dysfunction of black families are enormous and extremely complex. Among these complexities are, ancestral oppression (slavery), attempted genetic genocide (being uprooted from ancestral family ties), dehumanization (being considered and treated one third human), single parent homes, high divorce rates, segregation, and denial of resources necessary for survival.

The third culprit is gangs. Gangs have become salvation and survival for many African Americans. Not all gang members are inherently bad people. For many who want a sense of belonging and association but cannot find it within their biological families, an affiliation with gangs provides that acceptance. It is disturbing to realize that many in the black community consider gangs as family for whom they will live and die. God created every human being with an innate desire to 'belong' and be connected to a family unit. Any human being that does not receive love, acceptance, affirmation, and support from their family will always seek it elsewhere. The economic engine for gangs is drugs. Drug money is quick and easy. Drug dealers do not think beyond a two-week time period because they know that violence from rival gangs or the law can take them out in an instant. One of the reasons so many innocent people are gunned down is because of turf wars between rival gang members. Gang members will always protect the turf they have secured for drug distribution. There have been too many incidents where an innocent child has been walking to the store, or school, or church and was met by a stray bullet that does not discriminate according to age, gender, or ethnicity. Gangs breed crime, killings, intimidation, thefts, and the like. Because of this violence, members of the black community have become prisoners in their own homes and



neighborhoods. Many kids are afraid to go to school due to the recruiting tactics of gang members. Gang members 'intercept' and pressure children standing at bus stops or along the walk paths en route to school. There are no safe passages for school kids who want to prepare themselves for life in a legal and legitimate way.

The fourth culprit is the shrinking job market. Many companies that are not necessarily losing money but want to expand their profit margins will engage in downsizing. Downsizing means reducing the number of employees because of market demand loss or economic changes that lead to more automation and fewer employees. It can also often occur because cheaper labor can be found somewhere else, perhaps in another country. While we understand the pressures on some businesses to reduce payroll costs just to survive, it is a harder pill to swallow when people are cast off primarily to increase compensation and profits for those at the top. People who have worked for a company for twenty years and are let go due to downsizing are often not marketable and employable for other positions. In addition, they are much older which makes it extremely difficult to begin a new skill or trade. The modern phenomenon of downsizing has contributed to a high unemployment rate in the black community. Many who are willing to work either cannot find work or are unqualified to work in many of the fields that are available.

The fifth culprit is technology. Technology is often a tool for great good. But as we have alluded to already, it can also be the culprit behind replacing people with machines. The attraction is obvious: Machines do not complain, take breaks, get tired, take off sick days, or fudge on starting and check out times. Machines are often more

efficient and productive than people. Clearly, new technologies can actually create new industries and new work opportunities. New technologies can be wonderful tools to create or improve businesses. Thomas Friedman, in *The World is Flat*, argues that technology has leveled the global playing field:

Clearly, it is now possible for more people than ever to collaborate and compete in real time with more other people on more other different kinds of work from more different corners of the planet and on a more equal footing than at any previous time in the history of the world – using computers, e-mail, networks, teleconferencing, and dynamic new software.<sup>34</sup>

Friedman's "flat world" works well for those who are, or can easily become, insiders in the world of networking and technology, but what about those who, for reasons of education or circumstance, are left on the other side of the "digital divide"? The "digital divide" is a discrepancy between people who have the skills, knowledge, abilities, resources, and access to new information and communication tools, and people who do not. The digital divide can exist between those living in rural areas and those living in urban areas, between the educated and uneducated, between economic classes, and on a global scale between unequally industrialized nations.

The sixth culprit is incarceration. The majority of the prison population is made up of African Americans. Approximately 12% of the American population is African American but they make up 40% of the two million inmates in jail or prison.<sup>35</sup> Studies

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<sup>34</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 8.

<sup>35</sup> Leah Sakala, "Breaking Down Mass Incarceration in the 2010 Census: State-by-State Incarceration Rates," *Prison Policy Initiative*, posted May 28, 2014, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/rates.html>.

show that as many as one quarter or one third of black males will spend part of their life in prison. In 2000 there were 791,000 black men in prison and 603,032 enrolled in college versus 1980, when there were 143,000 black men in prison and 463,700 enrolled in college. In 2003, according to Justice Department figures, 193,000 college-age men were in prison, while 532,000 black college-age men were attending college. On an average day in 1996, more black male high school drop outs ages 20 to 35 were in custody than in paid employment and by 1999, over one-fifth of black non-college men in their early 30's had prison records.<sup>36</sup>

Clearly the drug trade, gang violence, and poverty-related crimes are the reasons many blacks wind up under arrest and sentenced. Yet, studies consistently show that whites and blacks with identical behaviors or infractions are treated much differently. Blacks are suspected, accused, and punished much more frequently and severely than whites. Even with black sports and movie stars, wealthy entertainers, governors, police chiefs, and our president, the black man on the street is subjected to a system inclined to treat him as a criminal.<sup>37</sup> The consequences are devastating to the community.

What do inmates have to look forward to once they are released back into society? Once a felony is on one's record, it follows him or her throughout his or her lifetime unless that offense is expunged from his or her record. One question that is inevitably on every job application has to do with whether or not the applicant was ever

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<sup>36</sup> Bruce Western, "The Impact of Incarceration on Wage Mobility and Inequality," *American Sociological Review*, (2002): 526-546.

<sup>37</sup> Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration In the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: NY, 2010.)

convicted of a crime. The very reason so many repeat offenders enter back into the prison system is because they do not have the means to support themselves or their family. One of the most demoralizing and humiliating things a man goes through is the inability to take care of himself or his family.

The seventh culprit is the church. What I mean by this is that we cannot just look outside the church and blame failing schools, families, gangs, the economy, technology, and prisons. The most powerful force in the universe is the church. The “gates of hell shall not prevail against it,” Jesus promised. Yes, we have false and compromised churches that are part of the problem. But there are scores of churches with faithful leaders and shepherds who love God and who preach the Word week in and week out. Black church attendance may be down, but it is not out. There is a mighty throng still to be found in good congregations in our communities at all economic levels.

Why are our communities still so impoverished and in trouble when God has these fine pastors and churches planted everywhere? Could it be that somehow we are failing to preach, teach, and practice the kind of “whole life,” “24/7” discipleship where Jesus is Lord of all of life, including our daily work and our daily bread? Are we specialists in the inner life of the Spirit, in getting saved, in looking forward to heaven, in the life of the church within the walls of our building? Have we been failing to bring Gospel insight and power to our work, education, and entertainment? Have we fallen into the trap of counting on our politicians and government programs to solve our problems? Have we fallen into the economic trap of expecting our business leaders to create our jobs and solve our problems?

It seems clear to me that all seven of the above “culprits” must be addressed, challenged, and overcome. However, for Christians to focus on the first six and ignore the foundational importance of reforming, renewing, and revitalizing our local churches would be a terrible mistake, a missed opportunity, and a betrayal of our Lord. Our call is not just to ‘church-place’ theology and discipleship, but to all of life. This includes a ‘workplace’ theology and discipleship, just like it is also to ‘home-place’ and ‘school-place’ discipleship. It is time to rise up in the name of the Lord. It is time to see some dry bones live again in our workplace. God is calling us. Will we go for him?

### **What Happens If We Do Not Answer the Call?**

If we fail to answer the call in our churches we might be abandoning the next generation. In October 2010, the Council of the Great City Schools published “A Call For Change,” which examined the social and educational factors contributing to the outcomes of black males in urban schools and compiled data ranging from infant mortality rates to adult earnings. It aimed to show the enormous challenges facing America’s black children – especially black boys:

The nation’s young black males are in a state of crisis. They do not have the same opportunities as their male or female counterparts across the country. Their infant mortality rates are higher, and their access to healthcare is more limited. They are more likely to live in single-parent homes and less likely to participate in early childcare programs. They are less likely to be raised in a household with a fully employed adult, and they are more likely to live in poverty. As adults, black males are less likely than their peers to be employed.

At almost every juncture, the odds are stacked against these young men in ways that result in too much unfulfilled potential and too many fractured lives.<sup>38</sup>

The elderly and aging are also suffering, not just the young. According to the AARP Research, African Americans forty-five and older have been forced to make increasingly difficult decisions to cope with the economic downturn - decisions that could have serious long-term consequences. In 2010 it was reported that 34% of older African Americans stopped putting money into a 401(k), IRA, or other retirement account. In addition, 26% prematurely withdrew funds from their retirement nest egg to pay for living expenses including, mortgage or rent, healthcare, education expenses, and for other reasons. More than 31% cut back on their medications, and 28% carried a higher balance on their credit cards during the previous 12 months.

Clearly, the economic recession had a devastating impact on the African American community. The survey also found that in the prior year, 33% of African Americans forty-five and over had problems paying rent or mortgage, and 44% had problems paying for essential items such as food and utilities. Nearly twice as many African Americans forty-five and older lost a job as compared to the general population, 18% vs. 10%, and 23% lost their employer-sponsored health insurance.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Michael Casserly, "A Call for Change: Council of the Great City Schools," *The Heartland Institute*, posted October 1, 2010, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://www.cgcs.org/publications/achievement.aspx>.

<sup>39</sup> Rebecca Perron, "African American Experiences in the Economy," posted February 2010, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/econ/economyaa.pdf>.

## **The Consequences of Ignoring the Problem**

The issue of unemployment in any context is a very serious matter, but it is magnified in the black community due to the level of frustration and desperation that is present. Desperate people do desperate things and I believe we have not seen the tip of the iceberg concerning what will happen in the black community if nothing is done. Samuel Butler said, "Self-preservation is the first law of nature." Every person has an innate instinct to survive; and survive they will, even if that means hitting people over the head and robbing them; even if it means breaking into homes; even if it means stealing cars.

One way or another, people will fight to survive. I know of a church that had an air conditioning unit on the roof and wouldn't you know it, someone climbed up and stole the air conditioning unit and all the scrap metal that went along with it. People are stripping aluminum from sides of buildings. If there is anything of value, hurting and desperate people will take it, one way or another.

People, who have a hard time making ends meet due to unemployment, often turn to substance abuse as self-medication. People under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or other controlling substances will do just about anything to get their next fix or high. Cases of prostitution are on the rise due to high unemployment rates and addiction in the black community. In fact, there are many mothers who sell their daughters to pimps just to survive. To add insult to injury, people who are already poor play the lottery thinking they will hit the jackpot. The chances of a person winning the lottery are 18 million to 1, and in some states 120 million to 1. To put that in the proper

context: the chances of a person getting hit by lightning are 2,650,000 to 1. A person is 6 to 45 times more likely to die from a lightning strike than win the lottery. But despite the odds, people in the black community continue to throw money to the wind playing the lottery.

People in the black community appear to have given up hope; they do not know where to turn or who to look to.

### **Blaming God**

The extremity of the unemployment crisis in the black community has theological implications; God is being blamed for the economic conditions in the black community. Many African Americans feel that God has let them down; that God has forsaken them. Even those who attend church on Sundays sometimes feel abandoned by God and their faith has been shaken to the core. Their confused theology consists of thinking, “how can a loving God allow people to suffer to this magnitude?” Church for many in the black community has historically been the life blood of their neighborhoods and families. Sunday represented much more than a time to refuel spiritually in order to make it through the week. There used to be a time when the pastor maximized his efforts to reflect a holistic Gospel. It was a Gospel that did not just give instructions on how to make it to heaven, but how to live here on earth.

I vividly recall growing up at Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church where morning service started at 11:00 and would end at 2:00; sometimes at 2:30. Why did services last so long in the Black church you ask? Church lasted so long because the



pastor dealt not only with spiritual matters but with pressing social, economic, and political matters as well. A holistic approach to life was presented to congregants and upheld by the clergy.

One of the most notable historic events at Fellowship Baptist Church was the stance Reverend Clay Evans took toward the powerful mayor of the city of Chicago, Mayor Richard Daley. The Civil Rights organization led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. needed a meeting place to plan a march that would take place in Chicago at Gage Park. Mayor Daley instructed all black churches to not allow Dr. King to meet in any of their facilities. At that time, Fellowship was in the beginning stages of a multi-million dollar construction project for a new church facility. Mayor Daley warned Reverend Clay Evans not to allow Dr. King to meet at Fellowship, and that if he did, the new church edifice would never be built. Long story short, Reverend Clay Evans ignored the instructions of the powerful Mayor Daley and allowed Fellowship to be the meeting place for Dr. King. For seven long years, the steel of the new construction remained bare and rusted as a result of Reverend Evans' resolve. After seven years, God gave Reverend Evans and Fellowship the victory, and the new church facility was completed. This was a powerful testimony of what God can do when you stand up for the sake of righteousness. After this experience, Reverend Evans adopted a powerful saying which he constantly had his congregation repeat. The saying was, "It is no secret what God could do, what He's done for others, He'll do for you!"

People in the black community are drowning in economic quicksand that is up to their chins. Given that reality, it does not matter who extends a hand; they will grab it.

If Islam extends a hand, they will give Islam their ear and there is a good chance they will become a Muslim. The same is true with Buddhism, Jehovah's Witnesses, or any other religious system. But what if the Church, which is meant to stand for and uphold objective truth, were to extend a hand to economically hurting people? There is a good chance many would give their hearts to the Lord. This could be the Church's finest hour! If in fact, the Church were to step up to the plate at this crucial time in history, they would be following in the exact tradition and footsteps of Jesus Christ. The Bible reveals that before Jesus preached to people, he met their needs. If people were hungry, before he preached to them, he fed them. If a person was blind and needed sight, before Jesus preached to them, he gave them their sight. The cleansing of the ten lepers in the seventeenth chapter of Luke is a classic example. As Jesus was approaching Samaria and Galilee he was met by ten lepers who stood afar off and cried out, "Lord, have mercy on us." Jesus did not proposition them by asking, "If I heal you, will you acknowledge me as Lord and preach my Gospel?" No, He simply healed them, no strings attached. As a result of the love of God expressed through Jesus Christ, many followed Him. I believe, if the Church is going to be effective and make an impact in our world today, we too must follow in the footsteps of Jesus and love hurting people by meeting their needs first, then let the evangelistic chips fall where they may. The Church can no longer sit back and allow issues of unemployment, poverty, inequality, and crime ravish and destroy our communities.

### **The Spirit of Entrepreneurship: What Could Happen If We Say “Yes”**

Historically, some of America’s greatest inventors and entrepreneurs are African Americans. Consider the facts:

1. Dr. Charles Drew (1904-1950) developed a system, now known as the blood bank, for storing blood plasma for blood transfusions which revolutionized the medical profession.
2. Elijah McCoy (1843-1929) invented an oil-dripping cup for trains. Other inventors tried to copy McCoy’s oil-dripping cup, but none of the other cups worked as well as his. Customers started asking for “the real McCoy,” which is where the expression comes from.
3. Lewis Latimer (1848-1928) invented an important part of the light bulb – the carbon filament. Latimer worked in the laboratories of both Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell.
4. Jan Ernst Matzeliger (1852-1889) invented a shoemaking machine that increased shoemaking speed by 900%. In 1992, the U.S. made a postage stamp in his honor.
5. Granville T. Woods (1856-1910) invented a train-to-station communication system in spite of leaving school at age 10 to work and support his family.
6. George Washington Carver (1860-1943) developed peanut butter and 400 plant products. Carver was born a slave and did not go to college until he was thirty.

7. Madam C. J. Walker (1867-1919) invented a hair-growing lotion. Walker grew up in poverty, but became the first female African American millionaire.
8. Garrett Morgan (1877-1963) invented the gas mask as well as the first traffic signal.
9. Otis Boykin (1920-1982) invented 28 different electronic devices, including the electronic control devices for guided missiles, IBM computers, and the pacemaker.
10. Dr. Patricia E. Bath (1949-present) invented a method of eye surgery that has helped many blind people regain their vision. She has been nominated to the National Inventors Hall of Fame.
11. Lonnie G. Johnson (1949-present) invented the world famous water gun - the Super Soaker. Johnson's company recently came out with a new Nerf Ball toy gun.

There are many more African American inventors and entrepreneurs, but these few are listed to highlight the rich heritage of the African American entrepreneurial spirit. It is this entrepreneurial spirit that we must resurrect and awaken in the black community. When this is accomplished, the black community has the potential to be transformed from a desert like condition to an oasis. Only then will a hopeless, despondent, and desperate people be refreshed and revitalized to a new reality.

Guy Kawasaki is someone who has written at length about entrepreneurship. He says “

My goal is to help you use knowledge, love, and determination to create something great without getting bogged down in theory and unnecessary details. My presumption is that your goal is to change the world – not study it. If your attitude is “cut the crap and just tell me what I need to do,” you’ve come to the right place. You might be wondering, who, exactly is “you”? The reality is that “entrepreneur” is not a job title; it is the state of mind of people who want to alter the future.<sup>40</sup>

Kawasaki is right; in order to make a significant contribution to the world, one must take on something bigger than oneself. As I reflect on the state of the African American community, the current conditions are beyond what one person can handle. It is going to take the concerted effort of many people working together in order to bring about a significant change. To repeat Kawasaki, “Entrepreneur is not a job title; it is a state of mind of people who want to alter the future.” If the future of the African American community is to be changed, it needs to be through “modern day prophets” with a strong desire to see a change occur in the black community.

John Perkins, an activist, author, and advocate of a holistic kind of Gospel, says on his web page,

We are living in an era of tremendous change and upheaval. Times of crisis are times of great opportunity. Recognize that “we, the people” are the solution. We are waking up and coming together. This is a time that requires commitment and courage; a time to soar to new heights. Through your actions and communications, you can inspire business leaders, political leaders, students and teachers, housewives and husbands – everyone – to manifest a world our children and grandchildren will want to inherit. Making a better world is the most satisfying and joyful thing you can possibly do. I look forward to doing it with you.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Guy Kawasaki, *The Art of the Start* (London, UK: Penguin Group, 2004), xi-xii.

<sup>41</sup> John Perkins, *John Perkins Official Website*, accessed November 28, 2014, [http://www.johnperkins.org/?cpage=1/](http://http://www.johnperkins.org/?cpage=1/).

If the the economic problems of the black community are addressed, there is a greater probability of hope being restored. I also anticipate spiritual dividends in the form of souls being saved, and economic and social reforms replacing despair, depravity, and hopelessness. An economic revival would restore hope, which could lead to a spiritual revival, and renewed faith in God. When the church of the living God establishes itself as “salt and light” in the world, a natural gravitational pull toward God can result.

African Americans were a more spiritual and unified people, dependent upon God during the painful era of slavery. Often, it is when people have everything, including pride, ego, and will stripped from them that God reveals Himself and reflects His mighty attributes. During the antebellum and post antebellum period, although slaves were in bondage, they possessed nothing but a God whom they could look to. Perhaps, the negativities in the black community – gangs, crime, unemployment, and such, are the very instruments God will use to draw an entire people back to himself; this was the case with his chosen people, Israel. It took over four hundred years of Egyptian bondage for the nation of Israel to return to the God of their salvation.

While African Americans practice a number of religions, Protestantism is by far the most prevalent. The religious institutions of African American Christians commonly are referred to collectively as “the black church.” During slavery, many slaves were stripped of their African belief systems, typically denied free religious practices, and were forced to become Christians. However, slaves managed to hang on to some of their indigenous practices by integrating them into Christian worship in secret meetings. Many Negro spirituals songs in black churches today reflect the secret meetings of

slaves during the antebellum period such as; “Come down,” “I am seeking for a city,” “Down by the riverside,” Rise and shine,” Steal away and pray.” Since slaves were prohibited from talking to each other, they communicated through Negro spirituals indicating when and where church meetings would take place. These practices, including dance, shouts, African rhythms, and enthusiastic singing, remain a large part of worship in the African American church today.

Previously, during the Civil Rights era and beyond, the black church’s role was paramount to the black community’s survival due to the holistic approach to the gospel. Pastors not only dealt with the Gospel of Jesus Christ but a liberation theology that set black folk free from societal oppression. The black church once filled this role and can do it again. The African American church focused on the message of equality and hope for a better future. Before and after emancipation, racial segregation in America prompted the development of organized African American denominations. The first of these was the AME Church founded by Richard Allen in 1787.

African American churches became training grounds to develop leaders and leadership opportunities that were denied to them in mainstream American culture. African American pastors were the bridge between the African American and European American communities within the American Civil Rights Movement.<sup>42</sup> In times of distress and opposition, blacks were forced to unite and work together. In a strange way, material blessings can become a spiritual curse; I believe this to be true in the case

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<sup>42</sup> Allison Calhoun-Brown, “Upon This Rock: The Black Church, Nonviolence, and the Civil Rights Movement.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 33 no 2 (2000): 168-74.

of African Americans. The black community used to be very close-knit. A real sense of community existed amidst struggle and opposition in our neighborhoods. When relatives moved up from the south, family members would all live together in a small kitchenette apartment. Now that many blacks have climbed the ladder of success, they have forgotten the tough road they took to get where they are. I believe God uses humbling circumstances to fulfill His divine purposes. There used to be a time in the black community when even if a person was not a Christian and did not attend church, they had reverence for God. Today it appears that the God of Mammon has replaced the true and living God of the Bible.

### **The Road Ahead**

A “great cloud of witnesses” has sacrificed blood, toil, trouble, and sometimes life, in attempting to secure a brighter future for coming generations. Those of us living today owe those freedom fighters a proactive attempt to contribute to the betterment of the black community. In fact, it is no longer an option; it is a matter of survival.

What I propose is to create a church-based ministry of “People Helping People” (PHP) that will have a primary focus on equipping, encouraging, and empowering our members and neighbors for the “six days you shall work” part of God’s commandment. We have looked at underlying conditions and causes, in addition to reviewing the need at some length. Three great facts we are led to as a result of this work are as follows:



1. There are men and women of all ages in our congregations and their surrounding neighborhoods who need and want to work but are denied the opportunity to do so. *There is a wealth of unused talent.*
2. There are many tasks and opportunities that need to be undertaken in our communities and regions. *There is work left undone.*
3. Our churches have financial resources, and even more importantly, human resources to help train those who want to work. We are all members of the Body of Christ. Members need each other. The Body needs all members to work and express their gifts. The world needs the Body of Christ to be a mighty alternative force. *There is power and purpose left to deploy.*

I believe that if the right initiative is successfully carried out, self-respect, pride, self-worth, dignity, and a sense of accomplishment would be restored to the black community. Men would receive the respect from others, both within and outside of his community that they need and long for. More homes would consist of two parents rather than a single parent trying to take on the load of two people. Drug dealers would have alternatives to illegal employment. Liquor stores would be replaced by thriving businesses in the community. The high school drop out rate would decrease. Teen-age pregnancy would decrease. A decrease in criminal acts would become a reality due to a higher employment rate in the black community. The benefits of these changes in the Black community would result in an increase in church attendance from residents and would bring about a more apparent faith in God...The church's light and reputation

would shine brighter in the community since many of these social changes would be birthed directly from the church.

There is an idiom that states, “It takes a whole village to raise a child.” It is time to construct that village. The village must include: politicians, faith leaders, lay-leaders, civil rights activists, businesses, entertainers, sports icons, and every resident in the black community. ‘All hands on deck’ is the urgent call in the black community. I believe through hard work, sacrifice, determination, purpose, direction, and prayer, the black community can come together like never before.

An attempt such as this is not unprecedented; Nehemiah was able to pull off rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem with the help and cooperation of his constituents. Although this was a monumental task, the people were able to complete it because, as Nehemiah 4:6 says, “So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had a mind to work.” The secret to accomplishing any task, whether big or small, can only be successful if the people have a mind to work.

In chapter two, we will briefly review several organizational models from which we can learn as we develop PHP on the Southside of Chicago. Chapter three will explore the Bible in order to build a firm foundation in the Word of God for our project. Chapter four will in turn describe the planned structure and functioning of PHP. Lastly, chapter five will assess our first imperfect, but real, projects under the PHP flag and reflect on where we go from there.

## CHAPTER 2

### EARTH'S MOVERS AND SHAKERS

President Obama, in his first Inaugural Address on January 20, 2009, stated,

For as much as government can do and must do, it is ultimately the faith and determination of the American people upon which this nation relies. It is the kindness to take in a stranger when the levees break, the selflessness of workers who would rather cut their hours than see a friend lose their job...a parent's willingness to nurture a child that finally decides our fate. What is required of us is a new era of responsibility – a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation, and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task.<sup>1</sup>

President Obama highlights the responsibility of both the government and every citizen, to address the difficult challenges that face every state, city, and neighborhood in America. When people gladly step up to the plate and selflessly tackle difficult problems in a community, we all become winners; either we all win as a country, or we all lose as a country. When segments of the country experience unemployment, poverty, discrimination, and injustice, the whole nation is impacted. Former trailblazers have demonstrated this very important principle of working selflessly on behalf of others.

In this chapter, we review several trailblazer organizations and leaders who went before us in the important work of making work opportunities available for needy and hurting people. These examples will help show us the way forward in creating the kind

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<sup>1</sup> Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, "Swearing-In Ceremony for President Barack H. Obama," *Fifty-Sixth Inaugural Ceremonies*, (January 20, 2009).

of organizations needed to overcome negative challenges in the black community, and build something positive and sustainable. All of these organizations and leaders are people of Christian faith with the exception of the first example; a god-fearing Muslim, Muhammad Yunus.

We are interested in what makes such organizational models like successful housing, mentoring and tutoring, training, and other programs, work well but we also need to know what causes an organization to fail. How can we avoid costly mistakes that bring failure? Some of the questions that need to be answered to avoid making these mistakes are the following:

1. What are some of the initial challenges faced when establishing an organization?
2. Where does the initial money come from to finance a project?
3. What is the best initial construction of a board of directors? Has the board changed and, if so, what changes in the company precluded those changes?
4. What type of relationship does the company or organization have with the community it serves? Is it a friendly or hostile relationship?
5. How do the leaders see God's role in their organization and activities?
6. What are the failures the organization has experienced? How did the leaders and participants overcome those failures?
7. What factors were considered in choosing a business structure?
8. What role does technology play in the business aspect of the organization?

## Muhammed Yunus & the Grameen Bank

Muhammad Yunus is a Bangladeshi social entrepreneur, banker, economist, and civil society leader. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for founding the Grameen Bank and pioneering the concepts of microcredit and microfinance from Chittagong, Bangladesh. His work has been inspiring to many individuals who want to make a difference, not only in the community, but also to the world.

A call to help poor and vulnerable people showed up early in Yunus's life:

Nothing in the economic theories I taught reflected the life around me. How could I go on telling my students make-believe stories in the name of economics? I wanted to become a fugitive from academic life. I needed to run away from these theories and from my textbooks and discover the real-life economics of a poor person's existence.<sup>2</sup>

Yunus knew that in order to feel what poor people felt, he must get a clearer, more realistic view of poverty:

The poor taught me an entirely new economics. I learned about the problems that they face from their own perspective. I tried a great number of things. Some worked, others did not. One that worked well was to offer people tiny loans for self-employment. These loans provided a starting point for cottage industries and other income-generating activities that used the skills the borrowers already had.<sup>3</sup>

The powerful point Yunus contributes to the discussion of poverty is, that every human being possesses a God-given talent. These talents have the potential to catapult those living in poverty to wealth, or at least to self-sufficiency, if realized and harnessed.

Yunus helped people to believe in themselves and realize their innate ability to succeed

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<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Yunus, *Banker to the Poor: Micro-Lending and the Battle against World Poverty* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 1999, 2003), viii.

<sup>3</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, ix.

economically, rather than depending on a flawed, unjust, and prejudiced system; a system designed to exploit and take advantage of them.

In Yunus's appraisal of the poor he states, "The poor, once economically empowered, are the most determined fighters in the battle to solve the population problem, end illiteracy, and live healthier, better lives. When policy makers finally realize that the poor are their partners, rather than bystanders or enemies, we will progress much faster than we do today."<sup>4</sup> Yunus viewed every human being as an entrepreneur. Yet he said that the gold mine of their potential must be tapped and cultivated in order to bear economic fruit. What we learn from this trailblazer is that suffering, exploitation, and marginalization are not ethnic phenomena; they reflect human deprivation across all ethnic lines. When we look more closely at trailblazers who have made their mark on a people, community, or nation, the common thread in their characters is selflessness and humility.

### **Micro-Loans**

Yunus developed the concept of micro-loans to provide a solution for people who were cemented in the sand of poverty, oppression, and hopelessness. Something within Yunus moved him to aid and assist hurting people by promoting self-sufficiency. The unjust economic system in Bangladesh assured perpetual generational poverty among the villagers. If a creditor gave a loan, he made sure the term agreement of the

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<sup>4</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 137.

loan was outside the reach of what the borrower could ever repay. Usually the borrower would have to borrow again just to repay the prior loan and would ultimately wind up in a cycle of poverty.<sup>5</sup> In an attempt to provide a solution to the villagers, Yunus had a list made of the people in Jobra, a village in Bangladesh, who took out loans with creditors. Forty-two people were named and Yunus gave all forty-two instant credit to pay off their loans. The total loan of all forty-two came to less than twenty-seven dollars. What Yunus understood was:

People were poor not because they were stupid or lazy. They worked all day long, doing complex physical tasks. They were poor because the financial institutions in the country did not help them widen their economic base. No formal financial structure was available to cater to the credit needs of the poor. This credit market, by default of the formal institutions, had been taken over by the local moneylenders. It was an inefficient vehicle; it created a heavy rush of one-way traffic on the road to poverty. But if I could just lend the Jobra villagers the twenty-seven dollars, they could sell their products to anyone.<sup>6</sup>

The formulation of support groups was crucial to the success of the micro-loan operation. Each applicant had to join a group of like-minded people living in similar economic and social conditions. Solidarity within the group served as a built-in accountability system. If one person in the group was delinquent on a loan payment, the entire group would be held accountable.

Group membership not only created support and protection, but also smoothed out the erratic behavior of individual members, making each borrower more reliable in

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<sup>5</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 49.

<sup>6</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 50.

the process. Subtle and, at times not-so-subtle, peer accountability kept each group member in line with the broader objectives of the credit program.<sup>7</sup>

Muhammad Yunus' "group membership" model is an effective tool for organizational structure. It provides a "built-in" accountability system, which encourages honesty, transparency, and deliberate integrity between those within the organization. All of these qualities are needed to build a healthy organization or institution.

### **Julius Walls & Greyston Bakery**

Rev. Julius Walls is the pastor of Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion church in Yonkers, New York and the President of Greater Centennial Community Development Corporation, which engages in real estate development and management, youth programming, and financial empowerment.<sup>8</sup> Walls has worked in business, academia, and pastoral ministry serving as chief of staff of Greater Centennial Church, CEO of Greyston Bakery which is a \$7 million dollar social enterprise; VP for a \$23 million dollar chocolate manufacturing company, and an adjunct professor in the business graduate schools at New York University and Bainbridge Graduate Institute. He is the co-author of the book, *Mission, Inc.*<sup>9</sup> Walls serves on several local and national non-profit and

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<sup>7</sup> Yunus, *Banker to the Poor*, 62.

<sup>8</sup> For more information, please see "Greyston-Bakers on a Mission," *Greyston Social Enterprise*, <http://greyston.com/>.

<sup>9</sup> Julius Walls Jr. and Kevin Lynch, *Mission, Inc.: The Practice's Guide to Social Enterprise* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2009).



government boards. Born in New York, Walls received his B.S. from Concordia. Rev Walls has been touched by, and has directly touched, thousands of lives through his work at for-profits, universities, and colleges. Walls teaches, preaches and speaks extensively throughout the country on topics of Social Enterprise, Social Purpose Businesses, Social Justice and Business, Spirituality in the Workplace, and Business Development in the inner city. Walls has built businesses and consulted for others, coached executives, mentored students, and inspired thousands of people to be the best they can be. He has developed life skills programs, affordable housing and homeownership opportunities; performed strategic planning that lifts organizations higher, and formally taught and influenced hundreds at the graduate level. In his various roles, he has met with Presidents Clinton and Obama, spoken at multiple universities, including several Ivy Leagues, and served on corporate, non-profit, and government boards as chair and member at-large.

Greyston Bakery, maker of the DoGoodie Brownie, supplies restaurants and ice cream companies like Ben & Jerry's and Haagen-Daz, with brownies. It is a \$7 million for-profit company with an activist approach; Greyston employs people from the poorest neighborhood in Yonkers, the fourth largest city in New York State. Long time CEO Julius Walls says that four out of every five Greyston employees have at some point been either arrested or incarcerated, did not graduate from high school, and experience limited literacy.

Who they are and what they do is thoroughly described on the history page of their website:

In the 1980's, founder Roshie Bernie Glassman recognized that employment is the gateway out of poverty and towards self-sufficiency. In 1982, he opened Greyston Bakery, giving the hard to employ a new chance at life. His open-door policy offered employment opportunities regardless of education, work history or past social behaviors, such as incarceration, homelessness or drug use.

Out of this hiring policy a new and larger mission grew. Low-income apartments were built for the formerly homeless, providing housing for bakery workers and their peers. Soon after, Greyston Child Care Center was founded to ensure that a lack of high-quality, low-cost child care wouldn't be a barrier to work. As the AIDS epidemic spread, Greyston responded by opening Issan House and the Maitri Center, providing housing and adult day health services for people living with HIV/AIDS. Growing disparities for community of color and growing concerns about the environment prompted the creation of the Community Gardens and environmental Education program. Most recently, in response to the recession, which disproportionately impacted poor Yonkers residents, Greyston launched WD 2.0, a comprehensive workforce development program.<sup>10</sup>

Greyston succeeds through three key ingredients. First, anyone can walk in and fill out an application. When a position opens, new employees start as apprentices, making about seven dollars an hour with no benefits. Walls says, "If you perform, you have a job. If you don't perform, we ask you to leave."<sup>11</sup> This contains the second key ingredient; Greyston insists on a strong work ethic and commitment to quality from its employees. This standard is set by Greyston, not by the employee. During orientation, quality performance expectation and the spirit of excellence are stressed so that employees know and understand from the beginning what is expected of them. Every employee is given a fair chance to prove his or her worth to the company, as well as to themselves.

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<sup>10</sup> "History of Greyston Bakery," *Greyston Social Enterprise*, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://greyston.com/about-greyston/mission-history/>.

<sup>11</sup> "Project on Social Innovation," *Harvard Kennedy School*, posted May 2, 2013, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://www.socialinnovation.ash.harvard.edu/featured-profile/greyston-bakery.html>.

Finally, Greyston provides support for struggling employees by helping them find housing, child care, health care, after-school programs, GED preparation, and tutoring. Greyston guides employees toward solutions to obstacles that would otherwise keep them from working.

With a deeper understanding of the local community, Greyston sees opportunity where others see liability. Greyston takes a leadership position by defying conventional thinking and being willing to absorb financial and social risk in order to help prepare people to enter mainstream employment markets.<sup>12</sup> As a result, they have become a very successful business. It is not impossible to strive for social change and experience monetary success at the same time.

What is commendable and noteworthy about Greyston is their compassion for struggling, hurting people. Greyston serves as a “second chance” ministry, providing opportunities to those whose lives have not gone according to plan, whether by dropping out of school, facing incarceration, or other bumps along the road. Every human soul has inherent worth. Jesus had a knack for uncovering people’s worth and potential. Outwardly, the worth and potential of the twelve men he chose as disciples was not apparent, but with patience and supreme love, Jesus was able to manifest the treasures hidden inside of them.

The lesson PHP can learn from Greyston is to not only provide employment for disadvantaged and marginalized people but to also provide assistance in updating their

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<sup>12</sup> “Project on Social Innovation,” accessed November 28, 2014.

skills through GED preparation, tutoring, and mentoring. Sometimes employment is not enough for those who are uneducated, unskilled, and unemployed; the greater assistance PHP seeks to provide is making people employable. When people are employable, the many problems presented in chapter one can be resolved.

Rev. Walls was also a leader of the Greater Centennial Community Development Corp.<sup>13</sup> The mission of GCCDC is to assist families and individuals in achieving economic stability and self-reliance. That goal is accomplished through structured programs like the following: housing development, including rental and homeownership, financial literacy, job training, and youth programming in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (S.T.E.M). GCCDC renovated a 28-unit apartment complex for hardworking families with low incomes in Mount Vernon, New York.

Exposure Camp, a project of the GCCDC, is a creative digital program for 13 to 18-year-olds to explore using digital media for content, app, and web creation. In an effort to bridge the digital divide, GCCDC serves teens in underserved communities by teaching tangible skills like programming, design, and content creation. Time is also spent introducing them to careers in digital media and design driven careers that utilize technology.

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<sup>13</sup> "Greater Centennial Community Development Corp," accessed July 16, 2015, [http://www.greatercentennialcdc.org/?page\\_id=67](http://www.greatercentennialcdc.org/?page_id=67).

### **Jesus People U.S.A.**

Jesus People U.S.A. (JPUSA) is a Christian intentional community of about five hundred people in the Uptown neighborhood of Chicago.<sup>14</sup> It began in 1972 as Jesus People Milwaukee and is the largest of the few remaining communes from that era. In 1989, JPUSA joined the Evangelical Covenant Church as a member congregation and currently has eight pastors credentialed with the EEC.

JPUSA runs an extensive program called Cornerstone Community outreach for homeless women and children in the Chicago area. Some of the ministries involved with CCO are the following: Sylvia Center, an interim housing program for families); Naomi Place, an overnight women's drop-in shelter; and Brothas and Sistas United, an alternative youth program. Today Jesus People USA is one of the largest single-site communes with such an eclectic cultural mix of hippies, outcasts, and others from various subcultures. Members share goods, hold a common bank account, run several local businesses and social service agencies, and reside in dormitory-style housing. Jesus People USA models itself as nearly as possible after the early church described in Acts 4: 32-35, "Now the multitudes of those who believed were of one heart and one soul, neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common."

JPUSA owns many types of businesses including; roofing, printing, carpentry, electrical, and social services, among others. They train and teach people various trades

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<sup>14</sup> For more information, please see "Jesus People USA," <http://www.jpusa.org>.

for the sustainability of their commune. Workers do not get paid individual wages; instead, all income goes into a general fund for the continuation of the JPUSA community. Workers are of course compensated in the form of housing, training, food, basic needs, and a small stipend. It is an entrepreneurial and communal business spirit that drives JPUSA.

JPUSA is both a church and a community since joining the Evangelical Covenant Church in 1989, and is run and governed by its pastors and board of elders. The main goal of JPUSA is to grow and mature people in the Christian faith through an intensive environment of Christian fellowship, pastoral care, biblical teaching, and practical work.

The most attractive feature of this church or organization is the internal emphasis of shared responsibility and accountability toward one another. Everyone's gifts, talents, resources, and finances go into a general pool for the sustainability of the church. The board and pastors are the governing mechanisms that are responsible for the organization's well-being. This is a good model of a church that equips, encourages, and empowers its members to work ethically, using their gifts, talents, and abilities for a common goal.

What PHP can learn from this model is the emphasis on shared responsibility and accountability, not just within the organization but to the connected denomination as well; in this case, the Evangelical Covenant Church. Unity is one of the main values that exists in the JPUSA community and PHP must also always operate from that perspective.

### **Abyssinian Development Corporation**

The Abyssinian Development Corporation (ADC) is a locally based, non-profit community development corporation dedicated to building the human, social, and physical capital of Harlem, New York.<sup>15</sup> ADC offers services to the community through five community development initiatives. These initiatives include the following: affordable housing development, social services, economic revitalization, education and youth development, and civic engagement.

The organization's mission is to increase the availability of quality housing to people of diverse incomes; enhance the delivery of social services, particularly to the homeless and elderly, and families with children; foster economic revitalization; enhance educational and developmental opportunities for young people; and build community capacity through civic engagement.

During the late 1980's Harlem suffered from unemployment, high levels of violence, AIDS, and homelessness. Banks compounded the problem by refusing loans to building owners seeking to make repairs. This resulted in very few new commercial or residential buildings between the 1960's and 1990's. Created by the Abyssinian Baptist Church in 1986, the ADC was a response to the difficulties faced in Harlem. The creation of the organization was principally supported by encouragement from Rev. Calvin Butts III as a way for the congregation to rebuild its community.<sup>16</sup> Reverend Butts III shows

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<sup>15</sup> "Learn About Us," *Abyssinian Development Corporation*, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://www.adcorp.org/learn-about-us>.

<sup>16</sup> Greg Clark, Joe Huxley, and Debra Mountford, "Community Development." *Abyssinian Development Corporation*, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://www.adcorp.org/community-development>.

the impact and influence of pastors in the black church. It was primarily the vision of Reverend Butts that encouraged the forming of Abyssinian Development Corporation.

Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

In 1989, ADC was officially chartered as a non-profit community development organization and received its first grant for fifty-thousand dollars.<sup>17</sup>

In 2009, ADC had a board of 21 members, all of whom participated in fund-raising activities, planning and policy development, and attendance at quarterly board meetings. The eight committees consisted of the following: audit, executive, finance, human resources, nominating and board development, programming, real estate, and resource development. Members of the board advised on high-level strategy issues and regularly reviewed budget and programmatic data.<sup>18</sup>

In 2008 and 2009, the ADC had a total budget of \$ 9.07 million. The most significant contribution came from government contracts and totaled \$ 3.72 million. The total expenditure in 2008 and 2009 reached \$ 8.70 million with the most significant cost being the salary expenditure of \$ 4.75 million.<sup>19</sup>

In 2012 ADC experienced a deficit of nearly five million dollars due to the tough economic climate. They instituted a program called "transition to transformation." This

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<sup>17</sup> Greg Clark, Joe Huxley, and Debra Mountford, "Organizing Local Economic Development: The Role of Development Agencies and Companies," 211, accessed July 14, 2015, <http://www.ebooks-share.net/local-economic-and-employment-development-leed-organising-local-economic-development-the-role-of-development-agencies-and-companies/>.

<sup>18</sup> Clark, Huxley, and Mountford, "Organizing Local Economic Development," 216.

<sup>19</sup> Greg Clark, Huxley, and Mountford, "Organizing Local Economic Development," 213.



austerity program properly aligned expenses and revenues and strengthened its balance sheet so the organization could fulfill its mission. This realignment resulted in a 35% reduction in annual operating expense, a 25% reduction in its workforce, and a 20% reduction in overhead costs. The specific breakdown of these reductions on a quarterly basis was: restructuring of programmatic and administrative functions in the first quarter; retrofitting underutilized spaces at several of its sites to accommodate staff, resulting in an annual savings of nearly \$800,000 dollars in the second quarter; and employing a spend-smart philosophy across the entire organization in the third and fourth quarters.<sup>20</sup>

During this transition to transformation period, leadership was consolidated. Internal talent was tapped and many of the leaders were repositioned to make the organization more lean; cutting out the fat and unnecessary positions that were not needed.

The key lessons the ADC learned during this transition to transformation period must be carefully noted by PHP. These lessons are as follows:

- It is important for the board of directors to execute careful oversight and consistent review when considering organizational operations and program area success and impact.

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<sup>20</sup> "Transition to Transformation," *Abyssinian Development Corporation*, (2012), 5-7, accessed November 28, 2014, [http://www.adcorp.org/Websites/adcc/files/Content/4716524/ADC\\_Transition\\_to\\_Transformation.pdf](http://www.adcorp.org/Websites/adcc/files/Content/4716524/ADC_Transition_to_Transformation.pdf).

- In order for PHP to be successful, it must maintain a diligent watch over its entire operation by the board of directors. A member of the board cannot simply be an idle seat, but must be an active participant in the organization's total operation.
- It is important to listen carefully and intently to funders, supporters, and collaborators, and ensure that their input is considered as part of our responses to the needs of the Harlem village.
- Funders and supporters are the life-blood of the organization and PHP must pay close attention to them. The fact that funders and supporters invest in an organization reveals their trust in the organization's vision. Their input should not only be welcome, but be reflected in the organization's outcomes.
- It is crucial to have a sustainable financial plan.
- In order for PHP to have a sustainable financial plan, it must not rely simply on one funding source, but several sources. Budget cuts in the federal, state, and local governments are unstable and unpredictable, making government funding unreliable.
- It is important to create a new business model for operations in order to thrive.
- PHP must constantly revisit the organization's business model. It is never safe to assume what worked last year will work today. Everything is constantly shifting; communities, people, government regulations, and

technology. PHP must grow along with the organization. This means to always analyze what causes growth.

### **Bright Star Community Outreach**

Bright Star Community Outreach (BSCO) is a 501(C)3 nonprofit organization based in Chicago.<sup>21</sup> BSCO was formed out of the compassion and commitment of its founder and CEO, Chris Harris, who is also the pastor of Bright Star Church of God in Christ. Bright Star and its community members are committed to strengthening vulnerable families and communities. Just as in the case of the Abyssinian Development Corporation, Bright Star Community Outreach is a community outreach that originated out of Bright Star Church. Bright Star's fifty year history is marked by a strong sense of community service and activism. BSCO serves the needs of more than 5,000 residents on an annual basis with programs ranging from after-school activities to the annual Bronzeville Family Fest. These services are free to the community and widely attended. The community enthusiastically supports all activities offered by BSCO and expresses the need for expanded programs and services.

BSCO specifically serves individuals and families in low-income areas of Chicago. Currently BSCO'S focus is on the training and development of women and children. BSCO'S community partnership approach is fueled by the idea that no single factor is responsible for the violence against women and children, poor economic conditions and

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<sup>21</sup> "About BSCO." *Bright Star Community Outreach, Inc.*, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://www.brightstarcommunityoutreach.com/about/about-bsco>.

stability, homelessness, child safety, or drug abuse. Family safety and strength depends on connection with a broad range of people, organizations, and community institutions. The ultimate goal of BSCO is to ensure that all vulnerable families have access to necessary training, employment, and development to become self-sufficient.

BSCO'S mission is to empower residents to share in the responsibility of building community through pooling resources and forming partnerships. Participants in BSCO believe they can accomplish their mission by developing innovative, performance-based projects and programs to address issues of community engagement, economic development, education, children, youth, and family. Below we will take a look at some of their programs.

BSCO's Truancy Education and Mentoring, known as T.E.A.M., is a program designed to combat the ever-growing problem of truancy and escalating gang-related youth violence in the Bronzeville area. The T.E.A.M. program is a multi-faceted educational and mentoring program model that provides guidance, personal development, and support to at-risk youths who are repeat truant offenders or have a record of multiple school suspensions. Through the T.E.A.M. program, enrolled youth will receive the support of adult and peer mentors and tutors. They will also be challenged academically and follow a structured schedule. The program includes both educational and online academic enrichment during the youth's suspension period so they do not fall behind. They will receive services from a team of adults, educators, and social service providers to ensure personal growth and future success.

The BSCO Advocacy Center is designed to provide supportive services to individuals and their families. They offer youth and family counseling, mentorship programming, housing and renting assistance, life skill training, financial literacy, workforce development, after school programs, parent cafe' and parent coaching, anger management training, and case management training.

The BSCO CPS (Chicago Public School) Safe Passage initiative is designed to provide safe routes to school for students in order to increase attendance, decrease violent incidents involving CPS students, and increase student perception of safety traveling to and from school. A student's safety and perception of safety can impact his or her academic performance. BSCO collaborates with public agencies and officials including the Chicago Police Department, the Chicago Transit Authority, alderman, and local elected officials from the community surrounding each school it serves.

It is noteworthy that the willing participation from the police department, transit authority, community leaders, church volunteers, and politicians in the Safe Passage Initiative comes from a unified goal to establish a safe environment for kids who want to be educated; this is an example of how it takes an entire villiage to raise a child. This shows what could be done when there is a vision and effective leadership. This is the kind of leadership that must be demonstrated by the PHP team, starting with the executive director.

This compilation of church volunteers, community leaders, and community volunteers make up the workforce that initiates and provides training and informational sessions on employment opportunities. They train adults to build a resume and develop

other skills to become qualified for employment. This program also offers adults a part-time job working with and mentoring youth. Adults working with and mentoring youth is not only strategic, but biblical, as is admonished in Titus 2: 1-8. It helps address the issue of broken families in the black community. Older men must become surrogate fathers and older women must become surrogate mothers to young people who feel no sense of direction or purpose in life. PHP will also have programs targeted at young people to provide a platform for expression of their talents and gifts.

In addition to the programs and initiatives pastor Harris offers in the Bronzeville community, he has established a substantive relationship and partnership with the Jewish community. This remarkable convergence allows both parties to learn and borrow traditions from one another and lend assistance with the advancement of all parties involved. A relationship of trust has been established between the two communities, and it is encouraging to imagine how far reaching this relationship will extend in the advancement of both communities. PHP must also reach out to different cultures, communities, and ethnicities that are hurting in an attempt to expand its work into cultures other than its own. Although the Jewish people were the initial ethnicity Jesus came to ignite and bring salvation to, he also aimed to impact and save people outside those cultural boundaries.

### **Lawndale Christian Development Corporation**

Lawndale Christian Development Corporation was established in 1987 by Lawndale Community Church to bring holistic revitalization to the lives of Lawndale

residents. It seeks to do this through economic empowerment, housing improvements, educational enrichments, and community advocacy.<sup>22</sup> To be more specific, the creation of LCDC came about as a result of the burden and passion of Rev. Wayne L. Gordon, pastor of Lawndale Christian Community Church, which is located on the west side of Chicago. Reverend Gordon always dreamed of establishing a ministry that would meet both the physical and spiritual needs of the community through sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Lawndale Christian Development Corporation's vision is to develop and manage community-enhancing residential and commercial properties. It seeks to become a partner for educational excellence and a catalyst for community revitalization in the North Lawndale community.

During their 20-year history, LCDC has achieved significant gains through community organizing. One of their major initiatives involved a program called Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP), which they spearheaded to bring much needed infrastructure improvements to Lawndale. In 1994, LCDC began an intensive series of relational meetings with individual community residents. Their plan of action was developed based on the residents' feedback and included improvements to the Ogden commercial corridor and four local elementary schools. LCDC won the support of the alderman and in 1995, secured a four million dollar commitment from the city of Chicago. They successfully leveraged this commitment for a total of nine million dollars in improvements to streets, sidewalks, gutters, sewers, and schools.

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<sup>22</sup> For more information, please see "Lawndale Christian Development Corporations," <http://www.lcdc.net/>.

The SNAP experience taught LCDC that they needed an even broader people base, one that was financially independent and thus, highly committed and autonomous. Several former key staff members and community stakeholders attended IAF's (International Accreditation Forum) "Ten-Day Training in Community Organizing." By learning the philosophy and successes of the IAF approach, LCDC members came to understand the great potential of broadly based institutional organizing. In 1997, LCDC became a founding member of IAF'S Chicago-region organizing coalition, United Power For Action and Justice. As United Power's lead organizer for the Westside Assembly, LCDC was responsible for recruiting west side institutions and training their leaders.

Since 1997, LCDC has been involved with United Power For Action and Justice, a coalition of more than 300 churches, mosques, synagogues, labor unions, hospitals, businesses, and civic groups from across the Chicago region. LCDC is very engaged in the United Power's successful affordable housing initiative, Ezra Community Homes, which produced 100 affordable new homes in Lawndale.

In 2003, LCDC was selected to serve as the lead agency in Lawndale for the Local Initiatives Support Corporation's (LISC) New Communities Program (NCP). LCDC is organizing local residents and community organizations around the development and implementation of a five-year "Quality of Life Plan." The goal of this plan is to create comprehensive, sustainable change in North Lawndale.

In 2000, LCDC opened the Lawndale Legacies CTC with funding from the Freddie Mac Foundation. Every year, the digital divide grows larger, both in the African American population as a whole, and in North Lawndale specifically. One's opportunity



for employment and quality of lifestyle increasingly hinge upon his or her access to technology. Those who are not adequately trained and functional in basic computer and related technologies find themselves unable to live the lives they wish to, or even take care of everyday necessities. The purpose of LLCTC is to decrease the digital divide in North Lawndale by providing community-based, computer technology-related training facilities and programs that seek to build self-sufficiency in individuals. The hope is that this will help overcome the cycle of poverty, discrimination, and isolation.

PHP is all about helping people regain dignity, value, and self-respect through promoting self-sufficiency in individuals to overcome the cycle of poverty, discrimination, and isolation. The spiritual element is helping people realize they are created in the image of God, which will lead them to another reality; that they are to fulfill and carry out God's mandate to become light bearers in the earth. This is the only way humanity can reflect God's purpose for their lives.

Every year, more than 300 community residents take advantage of academic enrichment software including, Internet access, computer courses in PC use, Microsoft applications, web design, digital media, and the assistance of well trained volunteers. In Real Estate Development, LCDC is leveraging resources to do the following; create quality affordable housing, stability in neighborhoods, opportunities for building equality; preserve architectural asset,,and to attract new community investments and jobs. LCDC'S rental developments increase the supply of quality, affordable rental housing in Lawndale, rehabilitating vacant properties and providing secure environments in which families can flourish.

## **Christian Entrepreneur Association**

The Christian Entrepreneur Association is dedicated to helping their members start, grow, and improve their own businesses the right way.<sup>23</sup> They ask, “Are you sick and tired of dealing with companies and people that act badly and have no integrity?” According to The Christian Entrepreneur Association, it does not have to be like that. This association is a group of individuals like you and me who want to create, build, and grow a product, service, or business in a way that makes God smile and brings many blessings to us all.

The goal of this association is to help every Christian business owner optimize their efforts in developing their businesses so they can better serve Christ and His family.

Part of CEA’S mission is that they are intentional in giving back to the sincere work of God’s Kingdom. A portion of each membership is set-aside for the members as a whole to help them start, build, and grow their businesses, and up to 50% of all membership proceeds are allocated to ministries proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Their mission statement is clear; “We are on a mission from God.”

The major contribution, value, and strength of this model is that it is an association specifically designed to help its members start, grow, and improve their businesses in a healthy and proper way. It aids and assists Christian companies in the spirit of integrity and Christian business principles. CEA’s goal is to keep Christian

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<sup>23</sup> For more information, please see “Christian Entrepreneur Association,” <http://www.christianentrepreneurassociation.com>.

companies reminded that they are citizens of two worlds: the Kingdom of God, thus a citizen of heaven, and the United States. They would argue that the two spheres should not be separate in their main functions and daily operations.

CEA'S end result is to make sure God is represented in an excellent light and that Christian companies are responsible for operating in a spirit of excellence which reflects such a representation of God in the business world. Another important aspect of their operations and goals is that all its member companies are held accountable to the principles of God's Word.

CEA can be a potential resource for PHP. PHP is not seeking to reinvent the wheel. CEA will be one of many resources PHP will consider looking to for guidance and direction if the need arises.

### **Venture Lab: Equipping Christian Entrepreneurs**

New Venture Lab is a virtual, web-based business incubator that provides resources, support, and training for entrepreneurs interested in integrating faith, family, and business.<sup>24</sup> They offer assistance to individuals and families for planning, launching, and operating a business based upon biblical standards and entrepreneurial excellence. Whether someone already operates a business or is thinking about starting one, they want to spiritually and financially encourage the success of the business.

The vision of New Venture Lab is to assist Christian entrepreneurs as follows:

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<sup>24</sup> For more information, please see "New Venture Lab," <http://www.newventurelab.com>.

- Equip the saints for the work of the ministry in building up and maintaining the Body of Christ.<sup>25</sup>
- Affect a right and true view of, and motivation for, work and wealth – one that flows out of a steward's heart of service to the Lord and directs all glory for any resulting success back to Him.<sup>26</sup>
- Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.<sup>27</sup>
- Seek and yield fruitfulness in all areas of family and business life in order to glorify God.<sup>28</sup>

Wade Myers is the founder of New Venture Lab. He is also the president of the Venture Academy, an entrepreneurship-training program with a course of instruction that includes lectures and Harvard business school case studies presented in a biblical framework. He co-founded the multi-volume film documentary series featuring Christian family businesses titled *Family Works: Inspiring Profiles of Family Business*, and his popular business planning tool Startup Financial Model is used by entrepreneurs worldwide. Wade has recently partnered with Crown Financial Ministries to distribute his materials globally through the new Crown business channel.

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<sup>25</sup> Ephesians 4:12-13.

<sup>26</sup> Colossians 3:23-24, Proverbs 3:9-10, Ecclesiastes 5:10, Luke 16:13, 1 Timothy 6:9-19.

<sup>27</sup> Colossians 1:10.

<sup>28</sup> Genesis 1:26-28, 1 Chronicles 29:11-13, Proverbs 15:6, 13:22, 22:29, John 15:8, 16.

The Startup Financial model is a detailed, multi-layered, completely integrated, easily configured, Excel-based, business plan model for those planning or running a startup or small business who want an excellent financial model to enhance their business plan and capital-raising efforts. This entrepreneurial support mechanism is ideal for starting companies such as PHP. It would be helpful, not just for PHP's initial start-up phase, but to keep things on track as the company begins to grow and encounter challenges.

### **John M. Perkins & the Christian Community Development Association**

Over the past ten years, John Perkins has worked to establish the Spencer Perkins Center (SPC), which is the youth department of the John M. Perkins Foundation.<sup>29</sup> Through the SPC, the Foundation's staff has developed youth programs such as After School Tutorial, Summer Arts Camp, Junior and College Internship Program, Good News Bible Club, Young Life, and Jubilee Youth Garden. JMPF also has a housing department called Zechariah 8, which provides affordable housing for low-to-moderate-income families, with a focus on single mothers.

John Perkins and his family have ministered to the poor for the past fifty years. In 1960 John Perkins, his wife, Vera Mae, and their children left a "successful" life in California and moved back to Mendenhall, MS to begin a ministry. Over twelve years, John Perkins helped start a day-care center, youth program, church, cooperative farm,

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<sup>29</sup> For more information, please see "John M. Perkins Foundation," <http://www.jmpf.org>.

thrift store, housing repair ministry, health center, and an adult education program.

Today, Mendenhall Ministry thrives under the leadership of Artis Fletcher and Ernestine Skiffer.<sup>30</sup>

In 1972, the Perkins moved to Jackson, MS where they founded Voice of Calvary Ministries – another Christian community development ministry.<sup>31</sup> Voice of Calvary Ministries started a church, health center, leadership development program, thrift store, low-income housing development, and training center. From this ministry, other development projects started in the neighboring towns of Canton, New Hebron, and Edwards.

In 1982, the Perkins moved to Pasadena and founded Harambee Christian Family Center in Northwest Pasadena, a neighborhood that had one of the highest daytime crime rates in California.<sup>32</sup> Harambee runs numerous programs including after school tutoring, Good News Bible Clubs, an award-winning technology center, summer day camp, youth internship programs, and a college scholarship program.

In 1989, John Perkins called together a group of Christian leaders from across America who were bonded by one significant commitment; expressing the love of Christ to America's poor communities, not at arm's length, but at the grassroots level. They formed the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA) and held its first

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<sup>30</sup> For more information, please see "Mendenhall Ministries," <http://www.mbc-tmm.org>.

<sup>31</sup> For more information, please see "Voice of Calvary Ministries," <http://www.vocm.org>.

<sup>32</sup> For more information, please see "Harambee Ministries," <http://www.harambee.org>.

annual conference in Chicago in 1989.<sup>33</sup> CCDA has grown from 37 founding members to 6,800 individuals and 600 churches, ministries, institutions, and businesses in more than 100 cities and townships across the country.

In the fall of 1995, John Perkins founded the Harambee Preparatory School (HPS), an elementary school providing quality education to prepare neighborhood children for college. HPS desires to see the children of poverty level homes receive quality academic training in a secure and loving environment.<sup>34</sup>

One of the most admirable things about John Perkins and CCDA is their emphasis on, and investment in, the youth. Many of his programs through SPC, which include tutoring, summer camps, and junior and college internship programs, among others, give disadvantaged youth a fighting chance in life; PHP seeks to do the same thing. Young people not only represent the future of the black community but can also be the voices echoing hope in the present state of affairs. Programs in the black community can impact young people by presenting them healthy alternatives to prison cells, gangs, violence, and drugs.

John M. Perkins espouses a holistic Gospel that focuses on the whole person. It will be helpful for us to take a look at some of his programs.

Perkins was instrumental in founding Christian Community Health Fellowship (CCHF) in 1978. This part of Perkin's ministry was formed to help bridge the healthcare

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<sup>33</sup> For more information, please see "Christian Community Development Association," <http://www.ccda.org>.

<sup>34</sup> For more information, please see "Raising Indigenous Leaders for Pasadena and Beyond," *Harambee Ministries*, <http://www.harambeeministries.org/>.

gap in marginalized communities where people from under resourced communities lacked the resources they needed to keep themselves healthy.

John M. Perkins Center For Reconciliation, a leadership training and community development center at Seattle Pacific University, was founded in 2004. JPCR is an incubator for developing generations of global urban leaders to impact communities through reconciliation, and contributing to community health and wholeness. What PHP can learn from this model is to focus on training people from a generational perspective. This insures that there will not be a leadership vacuum in the black communities in the future.

John M. Perkins Center at Homestead Christian Care in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada was founded in 1974. HCC creates affordable housing communities that support people seeking health, wellness, and belonging. The organization was founded by Christians responding to the challenge of deinstitutionalization that left people with mental illness on the streets.

A lot of what John Perkins has done through these organizations responds to many of the problems described in chapter one, and provides a good model and guide for PHP to observe and learn from. The holistic approach to ministry, laid out by Perkins, satisfies the biblical mandate given by Jesus Christ in Matthew 25:31-46.

### **The Challenges to Community Economic Development Organizations**

Nearly all nine of the community-based, grassroots, economic development organizations took a holistic view of development that included, affordable housing,



community activism, tutoring, job creation, and other vital services. All of these services help to create a safe and opportunistic environment in which disadvantaged, marginalized, and poor individuals can thrive and reach their God-given potential. These organizations uncover the problems that face urban communities and reflect potential workable solutions. They are a few of the trailblazers that have set an example of methodologies and strategies for those coming behind them to continue the legacy to improve, deliver, and set free those individuals and neighborhoods in captivity.

Upon close review and observation of these nine community-based, grassroots, economic development organizations, a model is now set forth for PHP to learn from and follow; the wheel does not have to be re-invented. PHP, a Parachurch organization, will take this holistic view of development to address the needs of hurting, marginalized, and disadvantaged people. PHP is a vision and plan that will enable people to help people. This can be accomplished through combining financial and human resources, including God-given gifts and talents, to address the spiritual, economic, and social ills that plague the black community. A complete strategy, organizational structure, and two year plan will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

The Community Development Corporations (CDC) cited in this chapter has been successful in their operation for the most part. However, in order to get a more balanced perspective on CDC'S we need to explore the challenges and failures many CDC'S have faced. William M. Rohe from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Rachel G. Bratt from Tufts University, and Protip Biswas from the Enterprise Foundation, conducted a research study of several Community Development Corporations that

failed, downsized, or merged. This study was titled, “Evolving Challenges for Community Development Corporations,” and concluded that they “found that both contextual and organizational factors contribute to CDC failures, downsizings, and mergers.”<sup>35</sup>

### **Contextual Factors**

Due to the loss of private businesses and the low levels of public investment in low to moderate income communities, CDC’s have played an important role in creating jobs and improving residents’ economic outlooks. PHP seeks to continue this pattern of creating jobs and improving the economic well being of the communities in which it serves. The creation of jobs will begin in the service sector; for example, lawn care and cleaning of commercial properties.

CDC’s are proven to be very effective in the communities they serve; this effectiveness was reflected in the doubling of the number of CDC’s between 1988 and 1999. However, in recent years these same CDC’s that were once prolific and effective have been suffering from organizational failures, forcing many CDC’s to downsize, merge, or shut their doors completely.

In the report written by Rohe, Bratt, and Biswas titled, “Evolving Challenge for Community Development Corporations,” they performed an in-depth study of six organizations that either failed, downsized, or merged. During the development of PHP

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<sup>35</sup> William Rohe, Rachel G. Bratt, and Protip Biswas, “Evolving Challenges for Community Development Corporations: The Causes and Impacts of Failures, Downsizings and Mergers” posted January 2003, accessed August 28, 2014, <http://curs.unc.edu/files/2013/04/cdcreport.pdf>.

it is crucial to examine both the successes and failures of these CDC's in order to create both an effective and sustainable organization.

The Rohe study identified several contextual factors that contributed to the failures, downsizing, and mergers. However, this thesis will focus on factors that can provide PHP with practical lessons to achieve its main mission of creating jobs and building the surrounding community.

The rapid growth of CDC's led to increased competition for the funding made available through private, foundation-based, and public resources. In the CDC's examined in the study, this competition led to the merging of several organizations in order to decrease competition.

PHP must be creative in terms of financing its objectives and outcomes. To achieve this goal, an expert fund-raiser must be sought out as a member on the board of directors.

In addition to the competition for funding between CDC's, changes in city policy also greatly affected the organizations. Many CDC's suffered cuts in funding to their core missions, especially those that were focused on building housing for disadvantaged communities. In the studies that focused on organizations in Milwaukee and Minneapolis, the priorities of neighborhood groups played a major role in the allocation of public funds, which often led to cuts in funding.

PHP must work closely with the surrounding community in order to remain a priority in their eyes. When the community is convinced that any organization has their best interests at heart, they will fight to insure that funding continues to flow to that

organization for the betterment of the community. In addition, it is vital that PHP retain ample finances to sustain core operations in the event of changed policies until another funding source can be found.

The support of local support groups, also called trade associations, is also necessary for the success of local CDC's. These trade associations help disseminate information between the CDC's and represent them in political processes. In the organizations that were part of the study, the lack of support from these trade associations adversely affected communication between leaders in the different CDC's and potential funding sources. This led to many CDC's failing or downsizing.

PHP will form relationships and allies with business districts, community leaders, trade associations, and religious institutions in an attempt to create a user-friendly environment, this will present a unified front to the community it seeks to serve.

Lastly, as with all lasting relationships, trust is vital. A certain level of trust must be maintained between all leaders, both within the CDC, and also leaders of other CDC's. If this trust is lost, the organization will suffer greatly. Those in the study that lost this sense of trust were either forced to close, downsize, or attempt to merge.

PHP will maintain a standard of integrity and transparency within the organization and with its partners to help create and sustain a healthy relationship. In doing so, PHP will run more efficiently and will be able to more effectively serve the community. Often times, when trust is violated there can never be a second chance.

In addition to the contextual factors, there are several organizational factors identified in the Rohe study that contributed to the downfall of several CDC's.

## **Organizational Factors**

The first problem that several CDC's had was an over-narrowing of their mission statements. For example, the OCDC of Dallas focused exclusively on building single-family homes, so when funding availability waned for those projects, OCDC was adversely affected.

Just as having an overly narrow mission can be detrimental to an organization, a mission that is too broad can also negatively affect PHP in the long run. Although there tend to be several areas of need in these communities, it is important that PHP create a focused mission that can withstand the changes a community goes through.

Funding is the lifeblood of a CDC. Over-reliance on a single funding source contributed to the failure of one CDC and the downsizing of two others. Since city funding is heavily contingent on the economy, it is important that CDC's have several sources of funding in order to mitigate any cuts from a funding source.

PHP must be diligent in acquiring several alternative-funding sources. There should be a healthy mixture of private and public funding sources so that PHP will still have funding no matter what financial circumstances affect various lenders.

If funding is the lifeblood, a strong, internal management team is the backbone. The CDC's in the study suffered from problems in their project and property management. These problems led to substandard work, a mismanagement of funds, and general disorganization within the CDC.

The internal management of PHP must be all of one accord. Qualified persons must fill all roles involving financial projections, the acquisition and allocation of funds,

the management of projects, and also the leadership of the staff. Staff and board members are more likely to stay active and engaged in their work when they have strong leadership at the head of the organization.

Although internal management makes the daily decisions, the staff carries out these decisions, and the board of directors helps advise the internal management team in the direction the CDC should go. The CDC's in the Rohe study suffered from a high level of turnover and this inability to keep quality workers, due to non-competitive wages, caused the workmanship of the CDC to decline. In addition, having an unbalanced and disinterested board can lead the whole organization down a path to becoming a disservice to the community, and ineffective in obtaining community support for city funding.

Communication problems within an organization always lead to bigger issues. There must be a clear line of communication from the executive directors and the board of directors to the community members, funders, and other supporters of the CDC. Rohe and his colleagues studied CDCW in Milwaukee and found that this lack of communication was a major factor in the organization's demise.

In order to be effective and long lasting, it is of the utmost importance that PHP maintain a clear and concise channel of communication between all stakeholders. When everyone is on the same page, the proper resources can be acquired for PHP's projects. With a strong level of support from the community, the organization can proceed boldly on the path it has chosen to effectively serve the community.

While managing the internal business of a CDC is important, it is equally important to involve the community in the planning of future projects. The people in the community know what particular needs they have and it is important that any CDC seeking to serve the community addresses those present needs. When the CDC is doing work the community views as important, the organization will have the support necessary to obtain funding. Rohe and his colleagues found an example in their study in which Whittier Alliance and CDCW failed to address their community's concerns and did not have the community's support. Consequently, they failed when the city's financial situation changed and they no longer had enough support to obtain the funding they needed. When federal, state, or local cuts are made to projects and programs of CDC organizations, community support can make the difference between whether the projects and programs will continue or be brought to an end.

Any CDC or organization must give due diligence to the community in the beginning before becoming fully operational. Rohe and his colleagues give examples of the negative effects that CDC failures, downsizing, and merging can have on a community depending on its context, and the characteristics of the organizations involved. These examples include the following:

1. The failure of CDC's to impact public and private sector confidence; especially in the case of mismanagement and fraudulent practices.
2. CDC failure negatively affected the production of affordable housing resulting in substandard housing. When well-meaning CDC's fail, it leads the way for private owners and investors to take over and milk a community dry.

Higher rents and “slum-lords” come in and exploit disadvantaged and uneducated people.

3. CDC failure results in neighborhood instability. When large multi-unit complexes close down properties become vacant and boarded up, leaving a potential haven for loitering drug dealers and prostitutes. In addition, real estate property value plummets, effecting surrounding property.
4. When property value plummets and neighborhood instability sets in, fear and distress grip the hearts of those properties’ inhabitants.

The organizational models set forth in this chapter served as trailblazer organizations that PHP can learn from, but these are just a few examples and the list is not exhaustive. There are many more books and articles which focus on the poor and needy that merit attention from organizations like PHP, such as the following: *Living on a Dollar a Day* by Thomas A. Nazario, founder and president of The Forgotten International; *The Bottom Billion* by Paul Collier; *The American Way of Poverty* by Sasha Abramsky; *Working Hard, Working Poor* by Gary S. Fields; *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty* by Steve Corbett and Brian Finkert; and *Walking With The Poor: Understanding the Principles and Practice of Transformational Development* by Bryant L. Myers.

Understanding what makes corporations and organizations fail or succeed is a wise and meaningful pursuit, but what’s more important is to understand God’s perspective on how to build something that brings glory to him; this is the premise of chapter three.



## CHAPTER 3

### BIBLICAL INSIGHTS ON HOW TO BUILD

Similar to the change that Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Martin Luther King Jr. fought for in the black community, Nehemiah and his contemporaries, Ezra, Esther and Zerubbabel, initiated a plan to restore security, protection, and religious freedom to the Jewish nation. In both narratives, there was a need for walls to be built. In Jerusalem's case, walls were needed to provide protection and security as the Jewish people migrated back to their homeland. In the case of the black community, walls of justice need to be built; walls of protection against police brutality need to be built; walls of employment and equity need to be built; walls of security from crime, violence, and safety need to be built; encouraging walls of hope and a brighter future need to be built.

There are some striking similarities in African American and Jewish history. Africans were taken from their homeland to a foreign land; the Jewish people experienced the same displacement. In 606 B.C. Babylon overthrew Judah and Jews were taken from their homeland.

Like Rolfe's purchase, (a purchase of 20 negro slaves who were off-loaded by a Dutch ship at Point Comfort in 1619) many of the first arrivals were transported to the mainland by Dutch carriers, dribbling into the Bay's inlets in small lots that rarely exceeded more than a score. Although some of the new arrivals hailed directly from Africa, most had already spent some time in the New World, understood the languages of the Atlantic, both Hispanic and occasionally English

names, and were familiar with Christianity and the other aspects of European culture.<sup>1</sup>

Africans' names were changed after deportation to foreign soil as an attempt to change their identity; the same occurred in Jewish history. According to Daniel 1:6-7, Babylon sieged Judah; the first thing they did was change their Jewish names.

Plantation birth registers listed a slave surname, and such evidence has convinced historians that the slaves were without family names. Such evidence, however, actually reveals much more about the beliefs and usages of slave owners than about the beliefs and behavior of slaves, who fixed upon particular given names. A surname often symbolized the close tie between an immediate slave family and its family of origin and a social identity separate from that of an owner. Slaves often retained surnames identified with early owners, and they and their descendants carried them from the eighteenth into the nineteenth century, from one owner to another, and from the upper South to the Lower South.<sup>2</sup>

Just as Africans were forced into a different way of life by their oppressors, the Jewish captives were subjected to Babylonian customs, religious practices, and dietary regiment in Daniel chapters 1 through 3.

Anne C. Bailey writes,

I would add here the ultimate irony of this cruel era was the fact that in many of these communities and regions (though there were notable exceptions, including and especially the more prosperous Asante community), it is difficult to differentiate economically between the former raiders and traders and their victims. Both sides seem equally mired in poverty, though the victims, it goes without saying, have borne the greater burden of this legacy- displacement and loss of land as well as the "shame" factor still associate with slavery in

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<sup>1</sup> Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: the First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1998), 29.

<sup>2</sup> Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925*, (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1976), 232.

contemporary Ghana. They, too, like their counterparts in the diaspora of the New World, also grapple with a fragmented sense of their history.<sup>3</sup>

Africans, for the most part, adhered to a different religious system than their displacement introduced them to; the same occurred in Jewish history. The Jews were commanded by God not to make or worship graven images, but Nebuchadnezzar commanded the Hebrew boys to worship a golden image when they heard the playing of the music in Daniel 3:8-18.

For Africans, religion was not separated from everyday life, which may have been why foreigners mistakenly assumed Africans either had no religious life or worshipped pieces of wood and stone. Life was given meaning through religious practices and there was no formal distinction between the spiritual and the material. Furthermore, I contend that some of the most durable African traditions in the New World involve religion as well as oral communication through music and oral narratives because of how integral religion was to African culture. Many communities in the African diaspora have held tightly to various elements of African religion. For example, Santeria of Cuba, Vodum of Haiti, and much of the religious expression in Bahia in Brazil, are fused with elements of African past. In addition, African American church traditions have long been influenced by African religious expressions. Finally, West African traditional religion has also historically been inclusive; ever open to change and adaptation.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Anne C. Bailey, *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and Shame* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2005), 164.

<sup>4</sup> Baily, *African Voices*, 190-191.

### **Responding To the Poor: A Biblical Mandate**

In light of the problems in the black community described earlier, what should the biblical and theological response be? What does God expect from those who claim to be in a covenant relationship with him? The Bible is clear on God's response to the devastation in the black community; He cares, and commands us to care, about the poor from cover to cover in Scripture. The Old Testament laws commanding the fields to not be harvested to the edges are an example of how God always provides and looks out for the poor. Ruth gleaned in Boaz's field. In Leviticus 19: 9-10, Mosaic Law commands that the harvest not be reaped to the corners nor the gleanings picked up. Gleanings were stalks of grain left after the first cutting. These were left for the needy, especially widows, orphans, and strangers, which we see in both Leviticus 23:22 and Deuteronomy 24:19-21. Ruth was a widow and a recipient of the provisions left from Boaz's field. This is an example of the rich providing for the poor. What Ruth received was a hand, not a hand-out. Boaz did not harvest the field for Ruth; he made it possible for Ruth to be provided for so long as she adhered to her work ethic. In Steve Corbett and Brian Finkert's book, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty*, they argue that it is more hurtful than helpful to provide "hand-outs" as opposed to a "hand up" for those in poverty.

Psalm 72 depicts an eschatological presentation of the glory of the Messiah's millennial reign on earth. This Psalm describes Jesus' reign when he will sit on the throne of David to fulfill the Davidic Covenant. The poor will be vindicated as described in verse 2, "He will judge your people with righteousness and your poor with justice; verse 4 He

will bring justice to the poor of the people; he will save the children of the needy, and will break in pieces the oppressor...For he will deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and him who has no helper.”<sup>5</sup> In this Psalm, God makes it perfectly clear that he is concerned about the poor and needy and we should be as well.

God’s mandate concerning caring for the poor and needy in Proverbs is filled with wisdom. We see this in Proverbs 22:9 which says, “He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor.” This proverb says that those with generosity will look at humanity with a desire to provide for the needs of the less fortunate. The principle of sowing and reaping is explicit.

Luke 18:18-27 is a portrayal of a rich young ruler who approached Jesus to ask the question, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus responded,

You know the commandments: *do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother.* The rich young ruler replied, *all these things I have kept from my youth.* Jesus replied to him, *you still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.* But when the rich young ruler heard this, he went away sorrowfully.

Jesus was trying to get the rich ruler to trade in material wealth for spiritual wealth.

Those who minister to the needs of the poor and needy have entered into a dimensional perspective; they realize where true riches reside; not on earth, but in heaven. There was a man who was the antithesis of this rich young ruler; he was a man who was also

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<sup>5</sup> Psalm 72:2, 12.

rich, but a man whose heart and value was not in earthly riches, but heavenly treasures. The Bible introduces us to a man named Zacchaeus in the nineteenth chapter of Luke. Zacchaeus was a short man in stature but a giant of a man inwardly. He became rich by ripping off people on behalf of the government; Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector. When Zacchaeus met Jesus (Jesus stayed at Zacchaeus's house), he said to Jesus, "I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." Jesus said to him, "today salvation has come to this house."<sup>6</sup>

There you have it! Two rich men; one was not willing to give to the poor and he walked away sorrowfully and did not receive eternal life; the other was not only willing to give to the poor but was willing to return a fourfold amount to those he cheated and deceived. Zacchaeus and his entire household received the true riches of eternal life.

In Matthew 25: 31-46 Jesus makes a very powerful and convincing argument for why the poor and needy should be cared for. Jesus seems to put himself in the place of the hurting, disadvantaged, vulnerable, and needy person. Jesus says, "I was hungry and you gave me no food: I was thirsty and you gave me no drink; I was a stranger and you didn't take me in; I was naked and you didn't clothe me; I was sick and in prison and you didn't visit me."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Luke 18: 18-27.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 25:31-46.

I cannot personally speak to the reasoning of the organizations presented in chapter two for providing housing, jobs, and mentoring, to the disadvantaged. However, I do know that the rationale and motivation for PHP responding to the needs of poor and hurting people will be based in the Biblical mandate of Jesus Christ.

The reason PHP must provide affordable housing is to take in those who are out doors. The reason PHP must provide jobs and training for hurting people is so they can put food on the table for their family, shoes on their feet, and clothes on their back. PHP follows the mandate given by Jesus himself when he said, “As you have done it to the least of these, you’ve done it unto me.”

The last Biblical mandate to the poor is found in the book of James. Christians both rich and poor lived during the time James wrote this epistle. The rich Christians claimed to have faith, knew the needs of the poor Christians, and yet would walk past without assisting them. In fact, the rich Christians often showed partiality toward the rich and snubbed their noses at the poor. James challenged people like this who claimed faith in God while shutting their hearts of compassion for the poor. His premier phrase condemning rich Christians in his day was, “faith without works is dead.” Clearly, this phrase is still applicable today.

The church world can no longer ignore the Biblical mandate God gives for tending to the poor and needy. As mentioned earlier, many churches have millions of dollars flowing through their annual budgets but not many have allocated one dollar toward the needs of the poor. What an indictment and horrific sin. The judgment that is coming upon such people is clear in James 5:1,

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. You have murdered the just; he does not resist you.<sup>8</sup>

God takes special note of the oppressed, widows, and poor. We must be very careful in the attention we give to less fortunate people. To reiterate, according to Matthew 25, how we treat the least of society will determine whether we inherit eternal joy or eternal punishment.

### **From Eden to Babel to Nehemiah**

This chapter will explore three Biblical stories that present major themes on how -to build something and how to work on a project, as well as the improper way of doing both these things. Regardless of how well-built an organization or structure is, if it does not meet God's mission it will fall short of God's purposes and plan for his people. The historical parallels between Israelite and African slavery in a foreign land certainly invite such a comparison study. It is also true that a strong tradition of respect for the Bible continues in the African American church and its surrounding communities today. There is authority, power, and insight in the Bible that cannot come from any other source.

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<sup>8</sup> James 5:1.



This is why the Bible must be the foundation for our response to the issues presented in this thesis.

### Eden: The Way God Planned It

We will begin by exploring the story of Creation in Genesis one and two.<sup>9</sup> What we find in these first pages of Scripture is that our God is not only the God of all the earth but is, in fact its Creator. It goes beyond the concept that “there is a God” who does a little creation now and then. He is in His essence and nature the Creator; it is in His DNA.

He created every aspect of this amazing world and universe including the following: (1) diversity represented by food, plants, and animals “of every kind”, (2) beauty since what He made was “pleasing to the eye”, (3) usefulness in that what He made was “good for” food, and (4) integrity and ethics since He declared everything he made to be “good” and “very good.”

How did God create? The story says He did it in the following ways: (1) by His word, which was “let there be, and it was”, (2) by His action when He formed man from the dust of the ground and woman from a rib, (3) He always worked as a team including the Trinity in order to, “let *us* make”, (4) through giving agency to His creation when He made animals and plants able to be fruitful and generate more life; man and woman able to cultivate the earth and procreate children; delegated the responsibility of

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<sup>9</sup> I am especially indebted to Professor David W. Gill for his insights and exposition of the workplace lessons of the Creation story.

naming the animals to Adam, and (5) He stuck with what He made, sustaining it and modifying it as needed; for example, creating two humans since it was “not good” for man to dwell alone; creating a barrier to prevent the fallen couple from getting back to the tree of life; and upgrading their garments from leaves to leather.

The pinnacle of the story is when God created man and woman in his own image and likeness. Genesis 1:26-27 says, “Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness...in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.” The implications this has for our understanding of work are massive. It is in the DNA of all men and women to do creative work in teams, to make beautiful and useful things, to not just create but to sustain and support, to do all of this in an ethical manner so that in the end it deserves God’s approval that, “This is good!”

This is the starting point for a Biblical view of work. It is our Christian “philosophy of work.” This is the kind of work, and the approach we must take, in responding to the multiple crises and challenges described in chapter one. We cannot just tell the drug dealer or liquor store owner to stop. We want to invite them into a team with a mission to use their *God-given abilities* to invent, build, beautify, raise families, and venture out into a challenging world with confidence in the presence of the Creator God.

### Babel: The Way Good Work Goes Bad

In Genesis 3 we find the story of humankind’s fall into sin. Things went downhill fast when Adam and Eve decided to go in a direction other than what God intended.

They ate the forbidden fruit that they thought would give them the same status and ability as God. Instead of being images of God, they wanted to be God himself. Disaster struck in the form of shame, accusation, hiding, alienation, pain, and toil in work life as well as in family and spiritual life. The first recorded example of this Fall was the jealousy and violence of Cain toward his brother Abel. The practice of polygamy, which disrespects women, and the degradation of humanity through slavery were not far behind. We see lies, exploitation, slavery, disrespect, sexism, and racism repeated throughout the history of mankind and his labor where people work for and worship money and power instead of creating good things for all to enjoy. This is the ultimate explanation of the horrors we described in chapter one.

In Genesis 11 we find the famous story of the building of the tower of Babel. In the Bible, Babel develops into the great city of Babylon. This city is the enemy of God's people in the Old Testament and the symbol of everything bad and evil under God's judgment in the book of Revelation. The story of the Tower of Babel announces a primeval unity of all people on earth. Despite the Fall, humankind is still described as one since all were made by the one Creator. This God-given unity is quickly lost through man's presumption and bad choices.

The story begins that "the whole earth had one language and one speech."<sup>10</sup> God made man as the one creature with whom he could speak<sup>11</sup> yet He took the gift of language and used it to divide the race since the apostate worship at Babel indicated

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<sup>10</sup> Genesis 11:1.

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 1:28.

that man had turned against God in pride.<sup>12</sup> God had commissioned humanity to be fruitful, multiply, and *fill the earth*. Instead, the people in this story decided to settle into the land of Shinar to begin their city and tower building project. Their main error was leaving God out. They wanted to exalt themselves by building something in their own name: “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”<sup>13</sup> The story is clear; the people, not God, chose what and where to build. They did it to try to make their own name great. They wanted to circle in and protect themselves rather than reach out to bless and serve others.

This building of the Tower of Babel acquired God’s complete attention.

But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, “Indeed, the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.”<sup>14</sup>

Dr. David Gill often compares the Babel project of Genesis 11 to Abram’s building project in Genesis 12 with the following points:

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<sup>12</sup> Genesis 11:9; John McArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1997) 31.

<sup>13</sup> Genesis 11:4.

<sup>14</sup> Genesis 11:5-9.

1. "Abram's migration began when (and because) God called him---not when he felt like it; "The Lord said 'Go'--- and Abram went." The Word of God was his foundation and point of departure. It was all about God's calling.
2. Abram went where God led him--- "to the land I will show you," not where he personally chose, not where it was convenient or desirable for other reasons, or where the demographic studies or market indicators pointed, but where God chose.
3. Abram lived and worked under the promise that God would bless him and make his name great—not with an agenda or motivation to make his own name great.
4. Abram lived and worked under the promise that God would make him a blessing to the whole earth---it was not about taking care of himself but about being a blessing to others.
5. And what Abram built (more than once) was an altar to the Lord --- not a tower but an altar. Altars don't call attention to their builders – they call attention to God, by thanking and praising him. Altars may be modest but they serve to point people to God. An altar draws people together as they are drawn to God.

The result of the wrong-headed building and job-creation project of Babel was that God "confused their language" so they could no longer understand each other. As a consequence they separated off into different linguistic cultures. God had commissioned them to go out and fill and bless the earth, but with a fundamental unity

and capacity to communicate in the same language. The situation turned on its head when they tried to come together in their own strength and for their own personal blessing. The result was losing the capacity for unity and to understand each other.

Much later, as a result of Jesus' death and resurrection and gift of his Spirit, a great reversal took place and people from all different language groups were able to understand each other on the Day of Pentecost.<sup>15</sup> In Acts 2, Jesus' followers met in one place and were of one accord. They did not seek their own glory or security but were content to wait for God's Spirit. God gave his saints the capacity to speak across linguistic barriers, to be understood in all languages. Babel was reversed.

The lessons of Babel are clear and can be outlined as follows:

(1) Before starting any work or building project, always consult God first. Psalm 127:1 reminds us, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it." The Babel builders led their project on their own, without God.

(2) Ask God *where* to work even if it is not in the easiest or most pleasant circumstances. Our jobs are not always in leafy, warm climes, surrounded by kind, grateful people. What matters is to go out like Abraham, wherever God chooses. After consulting God, follow God's instructions without deviation. God instructed the people to scatter throughout the earth, but instead, the people deviated from God's command.

(3) Always work in the spirit of humility and not out of pride. Check your motives to always make sure God's name is exalted and not yours. The Babel

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<sup>15</sup> Acts 2.

builders wanted “to make a name for themselves,” whereas Abraham trusted God to take care of his name and reputation.

(4) Any building project should always benefit others and not yourself.

(5) Be careful who you partner with; make sure your partner’s motives are pure.

Do not just go along with the crowd. Abraham left his people in Ur and went out at God’s call.

### **Nehemiah: Good Work in Tough Neighborhoods and Tough Times**

Our third biblical lesson on work and building is Nehemiah. In Nehemiah’s case, it was the will of God for him to rebuild the holy city, which was once glorifying to God. God’s blessings on Nehemiah’s work are clearly seen in the restoration and revitalization of the Jewish people when worship was reinstituted and families reunited. Nehemiah provides a positive message on how to build something the right way.

The backdrop for this story is in 605 B.C. when the Babylonian Empire conquered Jerusalem and carried the Israelites off into captivity in a strange land. Among the first to go were Daniel, whose name was changed to Belshazzar, and his three friends, Hananiah or Shadrach, Mishael or Meshach, and Azariah or Abed-Nego. This exile continued for seventy years when in, 539 B.C., the Medo-Perian empire conquered Babylon.<sup>16</sup> After Daniel was taken to Babylon, the Babylonian victors conquered

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<sup>16</sup> Daniel 5:30, 31.

Jerusalem in two further stages (597 B.C. and 586 B.C.). In both takeovers, they took more Jewish captives.

During the Jewish captivity, world leadership changed hands from the Babylonians to the Persians (ca. 539 B.C.; Dan. 5). The book of Ezra begins with the decree of Cyrus, the Persian king, to return God's people to Jerusalem to rebuild God's house (ca. 539 B.C.), and chronicles the reestablishment of Judah's national calendar of feasts and sacrifices. Zerubbabel and Joshua led the first return and rebuilt the temple.<sup>17</sup> Esther gives a glimpse of the Jews left in Persia (ca. 483-473 B.C.) when Haman attempted to eliminate the Jewish race. Ezra chapters 7 through 10 recount the second return led by Ezra in 458 B.C.

Nehemiah chronicles the third return to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem (ca. 445 B.C.). At that time in Judah's history, the Persian Empire dominated the entire Near Eastern world. Its administration of Judah, although done with a loose hand, was mindful of disruptions or any signs of rebellion from its vassals. Rebuilding the walls of conquered cities posed the most glaring threat to the Persian central administration. Only a close confidant of the king himself could be trusted for such an operation. At the most critical juncture in Judah's revitalization, God raised up Nehemiah to exercise one of the most trusted roles in the empire: the king's cupbearer and confidant.

Life under the Persian king Artaxerxes (ca. 464-423 B.C.) had its advantages for Nehemiah. Much like Joseph, Esther, and Daniel, he had attained a significant role in

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<sup>17</sup> Ezra 1-6.



the palace which ruled the ancient world at the time. From this position God could use him to lead the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls in spite of its implications for Persian control of that city. Due to the providence of God, Nehemiah was the king's cupbearer and had a close and trusted relationship with the king. God knows how to position his people at the right time to accomplish his purposes.

Many Blacks are accused of abandoning their people once they "make it" in life. When individuals climb the ladder of success, leave the community they grew up in, and move to an upscale community, they are accused of "changing colors" and forgetting their roots. On the other hand, there are individuals who grow up in the black community, become successful, and remain in the black community. These are the individuals who receive the greatest respect and are more likely to be followed. Loyalty is a highly regarded attribute in the black community. Father Pfleger, a white priest, has gained more respect and following in the black community than many black leaders, since his loyalty to the black community and their struggles surpasses that of many who label themselves black leaders.

Loyalty was a quality Nehemiah possessed; he could have gone back to Jerusalem with his fellow brethren, but decided to exhibit continued loyalty to the king. It does not matter what neighborhood one is from or what one's past, background, or nationality is; proven loyalty pays dividends. In the case of Nehemiah, his loyalty earned trust and catapulted him to being the prime candidate for overseeing one of the greatest building projects in history. Jesus said in Matthew 25:21, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many

things.” The correct attitude and perspective of believers is to be faithful over the small things and God will elevate them to big and mighty things in His timing. This principle should encourage believers to remain faithful unto death in whatever the endeavor. Peter further drives home this powerful principle when he says, “Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time,” in 1 Peter 5:6. According to this perspective, the way down, is the way up.

Nehemiah received some disturbing news concerning the conditions of the Jewish homeland;

*It came to pass in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the citadel, that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said to me, “the survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire.”<sup>18</sup>*

After hearing the news of his people and homeland, Nehemiah wept and mourned for many days. Our Lord says, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”<sup>19</sup> What should be our response to neighborhoods that are torn down? What should be the response to communities in peril? What should be the response to families torn apart by hatred and discord? What should be the response to communities ravished by crime, unemployment, and unequal opportunities? Those of the faith community, regardless of race, creed, or color, should all come together and mourn the devastation and work together on solutions to end it.

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<sup>18</sup> Nehemiah 1:1-3.

<sup>19</sup> Matthew 5:4.

We can observe Nehemiah's approach in resolving the problem that confronted his people and his land in the following seven steps:

1. **Nehemiah was moved with compassion.** His first and immediate response to the bad news he received was mourning and weeping.<sup>20</sup> Nehemiah's response of weeping and mourning revealed his sensitivity to the plight of the people. Just as Nehemiah was moved with compassion because of the plight of his people and their terrible condition, the same must hold true concerning the leaders of the black community.
2. **Nehemiah fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.** Nehemiah was on the same page as God because he was fasting and praying when he got news of his homeland. Fasting appears to be an outdated discipline in our postmodern era. There used to be a time when churches went on massive fasting campaigns when faced with overwhelming challenges and tremendous opposition. Whether individually or as an organization, church, or business, the believer's perspective should always be to consult God first. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding; in all your ways, acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths." Before any project, large or small, Nehemiah reminds us that we should consult God first. To balance this principle with a New

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<sup>20</sup> Nehemiah 1:4.

Testament admonition, Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added." One of the biggest mistakes in life is to go it alone without the assistance of God.

3. **Nehemiah acknowledged the sins of himself and his people.** Once Nehemiah acknowledged his sins and the sins of his people, God was able to move on their behalf. Although the destruction in some communities is evident in the outward appearance of boarded up property, gates and bars on windows, and people loitering on street corners, the truth is that sin can destroy any community no matter what it looks like. Community leaders lobby for money to provide more police protection; they use grant money to provide afterschool programs; they promote gang prevention programs; and they provide classes for family counseling and anger management. A host of other methods are carried out as well in an attempt to solve the urban crisis. Although the black community does need all of these things, the truth is that you can throw trillions of dollars into trying to solve the problems that face the black community but that alone will not alleviate the problems. Much of what is being experienced in the black community is spiritual in nature. Spirituality is the appropriate perspective and solution for not just the black community, but for the entire land.

If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then, I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins and heal the land.<sup>21</sup>

What the black community and other communities face is in part a sin problem; the sins of the oppressors as well as the oppressed. You can not throw money and programs at sin; sin can only be eradicated by the blood of Jesus, by honest confession and repentance, and by turning around in the direction of a new life. The problems of the black community lie in part at the doorstep of the church. The spiritual leaders of the community must come together and fast and pray, humbling themselves before a holy God. Then, and only then, will God hear and answer our prayers on behalf of the people and heal the land. Nehemiah clearly understood that Israel's problem was due to sin, that's why, the first thing he did before confronting the king was, confess both his, and the sins of the people.

4. **Nehemiah worked with governmental authority.** We live in an anti-government society. Congress and other elected officials are labeled, "the do nothing congress." Many United States citizens feel let down by, or have totally lost faith in their government. Whether Democrat or Republican, Congress is viewed as a total failure by many Americans. Many in the religious sector believe engaging and participating in politics is ungodly.

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<sup>21</sup> 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Those of that persuasion separate God from politics when in fact Romans 13:1 says, "Let every soul be subject to the governmental authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God." It goes on to say that the governmental authorities are ministers of God, administering punishment to evildoers.

Even if Nehemiah felt that rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem was a command from God, he did not bypass the governmental authority. Nehemiah appealed to the king. As an escort of the monarch at meals and as the cupbearer, Nehemiah had a unique advantage to petition the king. Not only did the king owe him his life, since the cupbearer tested all the king's beverages for possible poison, but he also became a close confidant. God sovereignly used this relationship between a Gentile and Jew to deliver his people just as he did with Joseph, Daniel, Esther, and Mordecai.

Nehemiah received official letters that transferred a portion of the king's authority to him. These letters allowed Nehemiah to pass through the lands of Judah's enemies who would otherwise harm him or prevent him from rebuilding Jerusalem. These letters were inspected at various spots along the roads that messengers, ambassadors, and envoys of all sorts traveled. Three months of travel from Susa to Jerusalem was long and dangerous, and ridden with these stations where letters that were required for passage. The danger associated with the passage, particularly the administrative authority contained in the letters Nehemiah carried, led

Artaxerxes to send captains of the army and horsemen with Nehemiah for protection.<sup>22</sup>

Nehemiah knew he would need lumber and other material for his building project.

Lumber was a very precious commodity. This is illustrated in a document from one ancient city in Mesopotamia in which a forest official is taken to court for cutting down a tree. Forests were carefully guarded and written permission from the king would assure Nehemiah of the lumber he would need to build the citadel, wall reinforcements, and his own residence from which he would administrate the reconstruction.<sup>23</sup>

5. **Nehemiah worked with joy.** In all the days of Nehemiah's occupation as cupbearer for the king, he did his job joyfully. This is another important principle for the believer's employer and employee relationship; whatever you do, do it as unto the Lord. Whenever the believer understands who the ultimate employer is, it may transform their work ethic.

After hearing the bad news of what was happening in his homeland, Nehemiah's face wore a sad countenance. Nehemiah's opportunity to appeal to the king came when the king said, "Why are you looking so sad?" The king knew Nehemiah was not sick; he discerned that something was pressing heavily on Nehemiah's heart. Before Nehemiah opened his

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<sup>22</sup> Nehemiah 2:9; MacArthur, *MacArthur Study Bible*, 660.

<sup>23</sup> MacArthur, *MacArthur Study Bible*, 661.

mouth to respond, he whispered a quick prayer then said, “Why should I not be sad, I’ve just received dreadful news that the city where my father’s tombs are, lie in waste, and its gates are burned with fire.” The king asked him, “What’s your request?” Nehemiah prayed inwardly again before speaking; he was under the complete control of God. Amazingly, the king asked him, “What’s your request?” In essence, the king was ready to give Nehemiah a signed blank check. Nehemiah’s request was that the king allow him to go back to his homeland to personally survey the land and make an assessment of the damages.

6. **Nehemiah made a plan.** The king asked Nehemiah for a business plan including how much time he anticipated the project taking, how much material he would need, and what the business structure would be, among other things. Nehemiah formed a partnership business structure between himself and God. God, working through Artaxerxes, assumed all financial liabilities which, God can do because “the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.”<sup>24</sup>

There are always a couple things one can count on when setting out to build anything. Whether it is a building complex, a CDC, or a corporation, one can count on the unexpected and on opposition. Both of these obstacles

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<sup>24</sup> Psalm 24.



were present in Nehemiah's building project. However, having a solid plan is essential.

**7. Nehemiah was ready to deal with opposition.**

Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem were all Nehemiah's enemies who did everything in their power to stop the construction of the wall. They threw insults, sarcasm, false letters, attacks, and everything they could think of at Nehemiah nevertheless, he prevailed because the Lord was on his side. Nehemiah organized his workers to watch out and protect each other - something we may need to do in some of our projects today. Seven attempts were made to stop Nehemiah's work:

1. Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem mocked Nehemiah.<sup>25</sup>
2. Sanballat and Tobiah mocked Nehemiah.<sup>26</sup>
3. The enemy threatened a military attack.<sup>27</sup>
4. Sanballat and Geshem attempted to lure Nehemiah outside of Jerusalem to Ono.<sup>28</sup>
5. Sanballat threatened Nehemiah with false charges.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Nehemiah 2:19.

<sup>26</sup> Nehemiah 4:1-3.

<sup>27</sup> Nehemiah 4:7-23.

<sup>28</sup> Nehemiah 6:1-4.

<sup>29</sup> Nehemiah 6:5-9.

6. Shemaiah, Noadiah, and others were paid to prophesy falsely and discredit Nehemiah.<sup>30</sup>

7. Tobiah sent spies to Jerusalem and wrote Nehemiah letters in order to frighten him.<sup>31</sup>

Through it all, Nehemiah was victorious in his building project. Two key factors went into the success of the building project which every believer must keep in mind when tackling any endeavor or project. These factors include the following: 1) Make sure God is with you by consulting him sincerely and often, and 2 make sure your team is with you for the duration of the project. Nehemiah 4:6, “the people must have a mind to work.” People who start and stop will be a hindrance to success in any endeavor or project. The positive attitude the believer must have is to include God and have a team of people who are unified by a mind to work.

### **Ready for the World of Work**

We saw in chapter one the devastation of the black community and its economy, mirrored in many other communities within the USA and around the world. We saw in chapter two that we are not alone; others have gone before us and will be alongside us as we try to respond to the crises of our community.

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<sup>30</sup> Nehemiah 6:10-14.

<sup>31</sup> Nehemiah 6:17-19.

Now chapter three showed us that God has light to shed on our pathway. We need not walk in the dark. He will go before us, walk beside us, and follow after to pick us up when we fall. We can see, from the Creation story in Genesis, the master themes in the good work we want to see happen in our needy communities. We can see from the story of the fall and in the story of Babel how *not* to decide on or lead our work projects.

And Nehemiah showed us how to rise up --- not just in the Garden of Eden but also in Babylon itself; not just in the midst of our friends but also when surrounded by wicked foes. Like Nehemiah, we want to rise up in humility and dependence on God, with compassion and joy in our hearts and on our faces. We want to collaborate and plan with the powers around us as they are able and willing to defend against attack.

Now in chapter four I will outline a specific project, an organization called People Helping People (PHP). On the foundation of God's Word, with the insights of others who have gone before us; PHP will bring gospel hope and transformation not just to the souls of people, but also to their very livelihoods.

## CHAPTER 4

### PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE, INC.

How shall we respond to the crisis of chapter one? Obviously this is a multi-faceted challenge requiring multiple active approaches. We need prayer warriors. We need faithful evangelists. We need Bible teaching churches with faithful, well-trained, gifted, and called pastors: faithful shepherds of God's flock. We need political leaders of skill and integrity, school teachers, functional families, adoptive parents, and wonderful day care givers. We need great businesses, small and large, growing and expanding in our communities to provide jobs and salaries as well as goods and services. We need a great police force and great fire fighters. The list goes on. We need everyone to roll up their sleeves and be all that God has gifted and called them to be.

The particular response I want to propose and create with my team is called PHP for "People Helping People." This will be a parachurch, non-profit organization helping the unemployable become employable, those without jobs to find them, and those with work needing to be done to find good workers to meet their needs. PHP has a five-fold set of goals that include the following: (1) job creation and entrepreneurship, (2) job training and development, (3) affordable housing, (4) evangelism, and (5) a state of the art youth recreational facility. The first two goals will be the initial focus but goals (3) through (5) are essential to our longer-term impact. The vision is grand, even enormous, but with God's direction, guidance, and help it will come to pass.

People in the African American community are fragmented and divided. Jesus himself teaches that a house divided against itself cannot stand. Any people that is divided and fragmented will not survive. The project I propose will require the coming together of prayers, people, financial resources, individual abilities, and agencies. In order to pull this concept off, people have to chip in and help one another in the spirit of unity. The very name of the company, People Helping People (PHP) Inc., comes from this concept. It is not just the company's name; it is our mantra.

Just the thought of a divided and fragmented people coming together to accomplish such a goal will help to stabilize and solidify the community. If left unattended, the black community will self-destruct. Every day we see accelerated destruction in the black community; abandoned buildings, prostitution, drugs, gangs, climbing drop-out rates in schools, crime, violence, and fear grip the black community where people have become prisoners in their own homes.

### **PHP Mission**

***PHP'S mission is to equip, organize, and mobilize people on Chicago's Southside, for productive, creative, and meaningful work, to the glory of God and in service to our community.***

This means establishing individual job training and development programs and small to medium sized business entrepreneurship programs. We want to assist hurting and disadvantaged people by helping them understand they are image bearers of God with valuable God-given gifts and potential. We want to restore their dignity, pride, and

self-respect as they experience the transforming love of God through our PHP teams and programs.

### **PHP Core Values**

PHP is about operating always with integrity and excellence. We will strive to be ethical and above board in all our affairs and dealings. We will operate according to Jesus' Golden Rule, "Treat others the way we would like to be treated," and Paul's injunction, "whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."<sup>1</sup> Our philosophy is to reveal to the world that God's people can be the best workers and business people the world has ever seen. To do this we will build and sustain an unwavering commitment to high values and ethical standards. The foundation of ethical and excellent performance is individual character and organizational culture.

The eight Core Values we seek in the character of all PHP participants and in every part of our organizational culture are the following:

- **Integrity:** Consistency between what we say and do, what we think, and how we speak and act; consistency with our conscience and with God's character.
- **Fairness:** Even-handedness and transparency in business dealings.
- **Respect:** Proper acceptance of and courtesy to others; recognition of the worth and excellence of people.
- **Honesty:** Truthfulness, sincerity, and frankness in all aspects of the business; maintaining a high level of integrity.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 7:12; 1 Corinthians 10:31.

- **Quality:** Strict and consistent commitment to a high standard of excellence.
- **Reliability:** Standing behind our work and our promises; repairing our mistakes.
- **Family:** Shared commitment to the mutual mission of stabilizing the community to the glory of God.
- **Fun:** Enjoying the task given to us, knowing that our life's purpose is being fulfilled.

### **PHP Ethical Guidelines**

All PHP team members, from the Board of Directors to part-time or volunteer staff workers, are required to comply with the following ethical guidelines:

1. Always practice the clear teaching and guidance of Jesus and Scripture.
2. Comply with applicable laws and regulations.
3. Comply with relevant professional or organizational codes of ethics.
4. Listen to and respect your conscience and the consciences of your colleagues.
5. Treat others the way you would like to be treated.
6. Do not do anything that would bring shame to PHP or that we cannot be transparent about.
7. Never do harm to others including financial, physical, spiritual, relational, or any other way.

## PHP Leadership

Edward Coleman, the author of this thesis, will serve as **Executive Director** of PHP, taking overall responsibility for the development and operation of the organization. A job description will be created and overseen by the PHP Board of Directors and the Board will review the Executive Director's performance annually. The Executive Director must first articulate the vision for PHP, recruit a strong feasibility, study, and planning committee (discussed in the next paragraph), and begin monthly meetings.

PHP will be operated as a **non-profit 501(c)3 corporation** governed by a **Board of Directors**. The Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws are yet to be drafted. A study committee will be formed and will hopefully include the following: (a) another pastor or theologically-trained, but community-oriented and savvy, Christian leader, (b) an attorney who will help with incorporation and legal affairs, (c) someone with educational and training experience, (d) someone with marketing and PR experience, (e) someone with graphic design, website design, and social media experience, and (f), (g), and (h) three people with business and financial experience, vision, and connections. Hopefully this nine-person study committee will become the official Board of Directors when incorporation takes place. At some point in the next two years, the Executive Director will pass the Board Chairmanship to someone else but will continue as a board member *ex officio* as long as he is Executive Director. An **Advisory Board** will be



developed in the first year consisting of well wishers and informal advisors whose names will add credibility to PHP and who can be called upon for advice.

### **PHP Funding & Financial Management**

As a non-profit organization, PHP is eligible to solicit and receive donations and grants for which income tax deductions are granted. After developing a first year start-up budget, the Executive Director and Board will adopt a financial development plan that will seek start-up funds from individuals, churches, businesses, and charitable foundations. Raising donated funds will be a significant part of the Executive Director's job description until a part- or full-time Development Officer can be hired. Initially, one member of the Board will serve as hands-on Treasurer and a capable volunteer, perhaps a retired CPA, will handle all cash flow (income from any source, receipting, paying invoices, bank records, etc.).

### **PHP Web Site, Mailing List, and Constituency Development**

As a freestanding organization, PHP will quickly build a network and distribution list of interested supporters and participants. A PHP website will be developed and maintained. An electronic monthly newsletter *PHP Times*, or *PHBP Sun*, will be developed in the first year to keep the constituency informed. A PHP information video will be posted on YouTube. PHP will create Facebook and LinkedIn pages. The Executive Director will create a PHP brochure and a PHP power-point presentation to deliver to potential supporters, churches, Rotary Clubs, and the like.

### **PHP Offices, Training Sites, and Staff Development**

Initially, the PHP offices and training venues will be provided by Calvary Covenant Church. As appropriate, PHP training and information sessions may be held in other locations. The Executive Director will seek volunteer and part-time administrative assistance as appropriate and approved by the Board. He will recruit and develop instructional teams and pro bono consultants to help lead programs and counsel individuals on workplace skills, job searching, entrepreneurship, and all related topics.

### **PHP First Year Plan (2015-2016)**

The four goals of year one (Fall 2015-Summer 2016) are the following: (1) basic PHP infrastructure development, (2) implement phase one work projects (3) initiate PHP church training modules, and (4) initiate PHP leadership training.

#### **Goal 1**

The basic PHP infrastructure development was reviewed in the preceding paragraphs. Putting it all in place to get it up and running is a priority beginning in the summer of 2015. This includes development of a first year budget approved by the Board by the beginning of fall 2015. It also includes development of a detailed plan for year two (2016-2017) by the beginning of summer 2016.

## Goal 2

The implementation of “phase one” work projects means matching workers with work opportunities in three basic areas: yard care, snow removal, and cleaning services. The initial challenge is to find or create jobs in the service industry, especially the type of work that does not call for a lot of skilled training. Lawn and yard care, snow removal, and cleaning services meet those criteria. For lawn and yard care one can do a lot without being, or claiming to be, an expert gardener. Mowing, weeding, raking, trimming, cultivating soil, fertilizing, and watering are all tasks people often need reliable help with. When winter comes and the yards are barren, snow shoveling is another service for which many would like reliable help. The third service area, cleaning, is something that is needed throughout every season. The initial goal for 2015 to 2016 is to hire and train at least eight people in the summer and fall of 2015 and deploy them to at least twenty-four work accounts in the three specialty areas. From December onward, we hope to replace the outdoor lawn and yard accounts with snow removal and shoveling accounts or additional cleaning accounts. This means that on average, our eight workers each have three job assignments per week. Pricing on work and level of wages is dependent on scope of work and standard levels in the community.

*We will find the jobs* by using our church and community networks to advertise PHP services with the Executive Director’s personal facilitation and contractual oversight. PHP will interview the customers to gauge their level of satisfaction and suggestions for improvement, as well as the workers to gauge their level of satisfaction with their experience.

*We will find workers* through our church and community networks and recommendations. We know of high school dropouts, parolees, and others beaten down by life, bad experiences, and serious mistakes. We will have prospective workers fill out a brief information sheet and conduct an initial interview to ensure that their attitude and readiness for work at a given task is appropriate. We will follow the pattern of Genesis and of Jesus in “sending them out two-by-two,” as much as possible. PHP will coach the workers and provide prayer, pastoral care, and encouragement. As appropriate, we will try to help them with life’s challenges, their financial management, and cultivate their spiritual life and walk with God. They are not just workers but whole people loved by God. We will seek to pay workers as quickly as possible; certainly within a week of their work.

### Goal 3

Part of the mission of PHP is to awaken other churches, pastors and laity, to the importance of workplace discipleship and economic development as components of our service to the Lord and His Church. Many pastors and churches have not been exposed to the strong and consistent messages on God’s view of work in Scripture. During this first year, the Executive Director will deliver at least ten messages or brief seminars on the topic by utilizing the Eden, Babel, Nehemiah framework described in chapter three above. These may take place in churches, seminaries, schools, marketplace fellowships, Rotary Clubs, Chambers of Commerce and the like.

#### Goal 4

PHP leadership must pursue continuous education to strengthen its hand in service of God and its mission. During the 2015-2016 year, the Executive Director will attend the annual training conference of John Perkins's Community Development Corporation and at least one additional educational and training event or course. He will provide a full report to the Board of Directors on these experiences.

### **PHP Second Year Plan (2016-2017)**

#### Goal 1

During year two, PHP will set and pursue specific growth and development goals for its infrastructure (finance, staff, planning, etc.) and organization. If possible, one of our Board members will begin to serve as Chair of the Board, relieving our Executive Director of that task.

#### Goal 2

During year two, the basic work programs begun in year one (lawn and yard care, snow removal, and cleaning) will be continued and allowed to expand organically into other fields of work as staff leadership is able.

### Goal 3

During year two, a church-based entrepreneurship program will be launched, training and enabling appropriately gifted individuals and teams to start new businesses.

### Goal 4

During year two PHP will launch a major focus on building construction and rehabilitation. Tradespeople (carpenters, electricians, plumbers, roofers, etc.) will rehab, repair, and remodel properties.<sup>2</sup> PHP will rehab multi-units and single housing unit properties not just to create jobs, but so people can have affordable housing. Other buildings may be rehabbed for service as child daycare facilities. Others could become beauty parlors or barber shops, with places for a manicurist, a pedicurist, and a massage therapist to help relieve the stress of daily life. The specific types of businesses the construction part of the company can rehab buildings into are limitless. In addition to acquiring and rehabbing its own buildings, PHP will also provide services to property owners who seek repair and remodeling of their personal properties. This will include, painting, dry walling, electrical, plumbing, roofing, landscaping, and other projects. As a minority company, PHP should qualify for city contracts for work projects in parks, schools, and other city facilities and projects.

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<sup>2</sup>The Smith maintenance company, which is licensed, bonded and insured, has assured us that his company will partner with PHP in this endeavor.

#### Goal 5

Applicants for PHP job and training programs will come not only from the churches but also from community networks. The alderman of our ward has already agreed to support a community meeting where PHP could share its vision and programs and invite applicants. In addition, PHP will work with Christian gang ministries and parolee ministries to find individuals ready to go God's way on acquiring skills and working like Nehemiah and his crew.

#### Goal 6

As the skill requirements for these jobs increase, PHP will have to provide appropriate skill and job training. At the most basic level, PHP could coach those needing to get the GED high school diploma equivalence degree. Job training will be provided by volunteer teachers and mentors and often by the foremen at particular job sites or contracts. The emphasis will be on providing job training to those with a specific job assignment in their near future. Much of the learning will occur in an apprenticeship fashion where a skilled veteran is coaching a newer recruit to the profession. Individuals will be learning their trade in conjunction with going to a job site to apply what they are learning.

#### Goal 7

PHP will strengthen its recruitment and training of volunteers who are seasoned, stable, Christian men and women who can provide mentoring, discipleship, and

friendship to our PHP work force. “No one goes alone” is one of our mantras. For many of our workers, overcoming past bad relationships and bad habits is every bit as much a part of the challenge as learning job skills and finding work opportunities. Our constant effort is to provide our workers with people who can be there to encourage them, give them wise advice on faith and life, help them integrate into a healthy church life, and develop their own personal walk with God.

#### Goal 8

It would be naive to believe that the PHP vision will go unopposed. It is not the Devil’s mode of operation to just sit back quietly and allow God’s agenda to be carried out. Since there are invisible “principalities and powers” aligned to destroy and stop the work of God, since we are not wrestling with just human foes but a spiritual enemy, it is essential that a growing team of prayer warriors supports PHP. Zechariah 4:6 declares, “It’s not by power nor by might, but by my Spirit says the Lord.” If anything is to be done, and done victoriously, it will be by the power and might of God’s Spirit. It is the role of the prayer warriors to offset demonic forces that will be unleashed to interrupt what God wants to do through PHP. Through fasting and prayers of intercession, we will secure the victory in Jesus’ name.

#### **“I Have Seen the Enemy”**

In our opening chapter we reviewed the bleak condition of the black community. Underneath it all we saw the spiritual battle going on for the souls of black folk, to use



W.E.B. Du Bois' famous book title. Therefore, there is an evangelism and discipleship task that must always remain a priority. I see PHP responding to this spiritual battle, not through direct evangelistic campaigns or church revivals, but by intervening in the daily lives of our people where they are at, where they hurt. Through this intervention, all PHP team members will be ready and able to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and guide the people into a relationship with Christ through counseling, discipleship training, fellowship, and worship in a God-honoring church. The opportunities to share the Gospel in this context are likely to be far more frequent than just waiting for lost souls to walk into our church buildings.

In addition to considering the spiritual battle over men's souls, we highlighted the lack of jobs and job-readiness in our community. I think it is clear in this chapter that PHP has a laser-like focus on finding and creating jobs and on training and managing a new army of workers, all to meet real needs in our community.

What about the problems and challenges that lie just beneath the surface of the unemployment crisis? We are not truly providing an answer to the job crisis if we ignore the contributing factors mentioned. Our focus must remain on the lack of jobs but we are also bold enough to think PHP can have an impact on the following: (1) the high school drop-out phenomenon, (2) dysfunctional families, (3) gangs, (4) the shrinking job market, (5) technology and the digital divide, (6) incarceration and parolee re-entry into society, and (7) churches with bad leadership or bad theology. PHP is addressing directly the fourth item, the shrinking job market by its direct programs. But what

about the other six challenges? How and where might PHP impact these underlying problems and their root causes?

The abovementioned issues within the black community are enormous as well as complex. There are no easy or quick fixes to all the problems that exist in the black community. Alongside the commitment of job creation will be a developmental, educational, and mentoring branch of PHP that will address the issues of high-school dropout rates, dysfunctional families, gangs, etc. From a programmatic perspective, PHP will provide GED, job preparation workshops and seminars, mentoring, tutoring, attention to at-risk kids, family counseling, and frequent meetings with pastors and community residents to address the other six challenges.

Governmental agencies have closed, shut down, or eliminated many of the programs that were targeted to provide a safe haven for the youth. The government's justification of shutting down important programs is that there is not enough money to fund them. The truth of the matter is, more money is necessary to expand police protection, deal with drug and human trafficking, build more prisons to incarcerate criminals, and rehabilitate ex-offenders. As a result, programs benefiting young people tend to be ignored or cut out. When left to their own consciousness and devices, young people will engage in destructive behaviors, both to themselves and to the community.

## CHAPTER 5

### UP TO SPEED AND UP TO THE NEXT LEVEL

PHP already exists not just as a dream and vision but also as a topic of conversation in my church and my circle of friends. It is their encouragement that makes me bold enough to believe PHP is a vision of God and not just a personal fantasy. For example, Edward Bailey, a chef, cleaning person, and lawn care maintenance person, owned businesses in the work sectors that will be the core of our initial job development programs. Mr. Bailey embraced the vision immediately and agreed to work with me.

One of the first cleaning contracts we secured was with Carmen's café on the south side of Chicago. A few of my church board members were eating in Carmen's Café for lunch and I happened to ask the owner's wife about who cleaned their restaurant. She responded by telling us she would contact us in about three months. A man walked in about 45 minutes later and for some reason I felt he was the owner. I told him I had just spoken with his wife concerning cleaning his restaurant. He asked me how much I would charge and I asked him if I could see all the areas he wanted cleaned. After he showed me, I went to Mr. Bailey for a quote and he suggested \$125 per week. The restaurant owner thought about it for about fifteen seconds and asked, "Could you start tomorrow?" This was the first cleaning account we acquired. I saw it as the very hand of God validating the vision of PHP. The second cleaning contract was with Uhlich Children Advantage Network (UCAN), a state-based organization designed to assist

youth in the area of education, poverty, gang prevention, empowerment, and job creation. We received a contract to clean the four Altgeld Gardens buildings where UCAN offices are located.

These initial experiments, which actually provided employment for some in need of jobs, were tremendous encouragements that PHP's vision is on the right track and at the right time in our community. When I look at the state of the black community, the crime, violence, unemployment, dropout rates, and hopelessness, I am disappointed with the churches that have the wherewithal to be part of the solution but refuse to address the community's problems.

It is as if many of the churches in the black community are like the priest and Levite in the story of the Good Samaritan; they cross the street to avoid contact with the vulnerable and hurting people. PHP is designed to be like the Samaritan who helps hurting people. PHP is not just the name of our company, it is our mantra; People Helping People!

In these initial work placement projects I was not only positively encouraged and affirmed; I also learned how difficult and challenging this project will be. Nothing is easy. No matter how much one thinks he or she knows going in, "on the job training" will be the principal teacher and trainer. We received several complaints from our customers, both in the lawn care and cleaning and janitorial sectors. We discovered that one of our workers was always in a rush as if he was behind schedule so I personally observed his work ethic. He is a hard worker but what I discovered was that he always needs someone watching over his work. He needs a supervisor to oversee and manage

his time schedule and work efficiency. When I put someone in place to supervise him, his job performance improved and what resulted was a win, win situation.

Another valuable lesson I am learning is how important and significant people are. I was always aware of this fact but to actually see a need being addressed through gainful employment is both rewarding and fulfilling. My hypothesis is being realized. I always thought that lending a helping hand brings out the best in decent people. Here is an individual with a criminal record, married with two children, made to feel proud, significant, and of value because he is able to provide for his family legally, while at the same time knowing he accomplished something significant. This individual commented, "I take pride in what I do." When I cut grass, I step back and admire the beauty of the grass." He leaves his work with a satisfying exuberance, similarly to how a professional painter admires a painting he has just completed. I experience pure joy when I see a worker experience pride, respect, and satisfaction. I believe that each worker who does a good job says exactly what God said when He created the heavens and the earth, "It is very good;" this is what it means to be image bearers of God.

I have learned that I must be patient and understanding of people. What I mean by that is; the very people I am trying to help will sometimes make it extremely difficult to help them. Even though I am trying to create jobs for people, the very people I am trying to help will criticize, hinder, and not support the vision. In fact, many will not get on board until the wagon is in full motion. Some of the very people who refused to help in the beginning stages will probably be the very ones who feel PHP owe them something by either giving them a job or giving a relative a job.

Work is very important to God; He worked for six days in the creation of this world. Some might be of the opinion that God never intended for man to work. This is not true; God placed Adam in the garden to tend it: “Then God said, let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth.” Adam was responsible for planting the seeds within the fruit God created. The entry of sin into the world came in the form of toil and labor. Just as God uttered an appraisal of his work, “It was very good,” God appraises our performance as it relates to work. In that same light, there will be an appraisal of the performance of PHP workers.

There are four performance improvement needs (Phillips 2002)<sup>1</sup> which include the following: business, job performance, training, and individual.

- Business Needs – Investigate the problem or performance initiative and see how it supports the mission statement, leader’s vision, and organizational goals, etc.
- Job Performance Needs –Job performance needs normally relate more to the present whereas business needs often tend to be more developmental, or future oriented, in nature.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Phillips and P. Phillips, “Reasons Why Training & Development Fails and What You Can Do About It,” *Training Magazine* (September 2002): 78-85; Allison Rossett and Kendra Sheldon, *Beyond the Podium: Delivering Training and Performance to a Digital World* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 67; G. Rummler and A. Brache, *Improving Performance: How to Manage the White Space on the Organizational Chart* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1991); “Missing Artillery,” *Training Magazine in the Training Today Column* (October 2004): 15.

- **Training Needs** – This is what the performer or worker needs to know in order to be successful in their job performance.
- **Individual Needs** – This analysis mechanism focuses on the individual worker to see what is needed for that individual to perform his or her specific job duty.

The whole purpose of this performance analysis is to ensure that each worker always operates in the spirit of excellence. PHP's desire to glorify God must always be at the forefront of its operation. One way that is achieved is to establish a culture that reflects the spirit of excellence. The ultimate performance analysis at the end of the day is to hear God's voice say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

### **Spiritual Development**

I believe that spiritual development will be a natural progression of economic development. What I see in inner cities are disadvantaged people drowning in economic quicksand up to their chins. I believe whoever extends a helping hand will earn the right to be heard. If someone of another faith expression extends a hand, they will have an opportunity to share their particular faith or belief to the one they help. If the church steps up to the plate and extends a helping hand, the Gospel can be given to hurting, desperate people. This can be the church's finest hour. As Jesus was calling his disciples he said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." I believe PHP is the right "bait" and the Gospel is the right message. I expect to see souls coming to Christ

as a result of the love of God being expressed to hurting people by providing gainful and meaningful employment.

### **Taking It to the Next Levels**

We have described the development and program goals for PHP's first two years. As ambitious as these goals already are, there is so much more that could be done, and needs to be done, for our community. The possibilities that could result from these goals include the following:

- A credit union to help customers finance repair and remodeling or other services. This could also provide loans at reasonable rates.
- A tutoring program to help students succeed in school.
- Sewing and cooking clubs.
- Youth programs like cheerleading and cotillion or beautillion-type clubs to teach womanhood, manhood, and etiquette. These would also promote family, specifically mother and daughter, father and daughter, mother and son, and father and son relationships.
- A state-of-the-art youth recreational center with basketball and volleyball courts, a swimming pool, game rooms, and several private rooms for tutoring and counseling. The purpose for this recreational center is to take young people off the streets and outline a positive direction for their lives.

Students would be eligible to come to the center after school and use the



recreational facilities subject to commitments to also succeed in their schoolwork.

- Academic scholarships to assist and encourage young students in their educational pursuits.

As I mentioned earlier, my former pastor, the legendary Rev. Clay Evans, was fond of saying (and singing) “It is no secret what God can do!” I believe that, I have seen it, and I want to be one of those who carry that torch forward in my generation. Some folks driving through parts of our downtrodden Chicago neighborhoods might see solely defeat and despair; I see challenge and opportunity. Some might look at the prostitute, gang member or alcoholic on the street and feel only fear or disgust; I see people made in the image of God with value, gifts, and potential that is buried under the weight of sin, bad choices, hopelessness and helplessness, but are able through God’s mighty resurrection power rise to new life.

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